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# FLEURS-DE-LYS

A BOOK OF FRENCH POETRY FREELY  
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE  
WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

WILFRID THORLEY

Author of "Confessional and other Poems," 1911;  
"Paul Verlaine," 1914



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LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN



*Verball Translators sticke to the bare Text  
Sometimes so close, the Reader is perplext,  
Finding the words, to finde the wit that sprung  
From the first writer in his native tongue.  
The spirit of an Author being fled,  
His naked lines looke like a body dead.*

**AURELIAN TOWNSHEND**  
Circa 1620

*L'essentiel, dans une version étrangère d'une poème, n'est pas  
l'exactitude des détails, mais la vérité de l'ensemble, et cette  
vérité ne peut se rencontrer que par le fait d'une sorte de création  
nouvelle par des moyens nouveaux.*

**ALBERT MOCKEL**  
1916



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## INTRODUCTION

### I

#### GENERAL

**I**N a western suburb of London, at no great distance from the coal-yards contiguous to the railway sidings of Paddington Station, may be seen a house bearing this motto in large letters above its doorway : "Ce qui doit être sera." "What must be must," I rendered it on first passing, reading its message as that of a fatalist and stoic thinker. And then doubt assailed me. "What ought to be shall be," I varied it, at once turning its author into one not at all resigned to things as they are, but sworn heroically to make the right prevail. But further deliberation revealed the rightness of my first impression, for the second interpretation would need *devrait* in place of *doit* to justify it. This example, however, may stand as an illustration of the truth that, in translation, it is a small thing to know, etymologically, the literal equivalent of foreign words, the important thing being to understand their intention, and to render their effect in your own way. "Il s'est brûlé le cerveau" means "He blew out his brains," and to insist that *brûler* means *burn* is only to make nonsense of the phrase by suggesting that some one either worried himself into a brain-fever or worked himself into a passion.

This being so with a simple prose statement, the

matter is obviously ten times more intricate when we come to poetry, where subtleties of sound are to be reproduced and the sense preserved, while duly conforming to the tyrannous exigencies of rhyme and metre. Let it be granted, at once, that it cannot be done ; but, since the whole reason of this book is the determination to attempt it, let us see how best to guard against futility.

In Leoncavallo's well-known operetta "I Pagliacci" the strolling player invites the peasant rout to assemble for a performance *a venti tre ore*, the last word filling magnificently the swelling finale of the musical phrase to which it is wedded, and, by contrast with the meagre dignity of its bare meaning, achieving a fine effect of intentionally mock pomposity. In the English version of this the tenor is made to sing "at seven you're invited," and the translation is bad, not from any disparity of meaning, but because two hard dentals are made to replace a soft "r" which is hardly more than a *liaison* between two open vowels. And this is done to the great hurt of the singer and his hearers—who are in this case, surely, the only people whom such a version can concern. When we come to the translation of works of pure literature, and especially of poetry, the same difficulties persist, while the responsibilities of the translator are extended to a wider audience, and for more permanent reasons.

In the case of the interpretation of French, which is undoubtedly the foreign language best known among our countrymen, the apparent easiness of translation hides one of the greatest pitfalls, for we have filched from our Gallic cousins a good round hundred of common words which we now use to express meanings a world away from those of their native intention, or, conversely, we have kept the meaning which the

Norman gave them, but which the modern Frenchman has forgotten or differently applied. The English translator who should set down *grief*, *large*, *resume* or *spiritual* as equivalents for the like words when found in his French text would produce a most unpardonable parody of his original. In other cases, where words common to the two tongues have retained identity of meaning, they are sometimes enhaloed by poetic suggestion in the one while connoting no more than their bare prose meaning in the other, so that their retention in translation, however correct literally, would be no less of an outrage by reducing to a hireling's rank what should remain aloof and regal. It may, indeed, almost be taken as an axiom that words from a Latin or French source, so singularly apt for scientific exposition, from the exactness with which they define material substance or action, can never fitly be used in poetry, where words, to be effective, must carry us far beyond the limits of their dictionary schedule, and bear with them the redolence of all the dead lips that have ever breathed them. To discover why it is that *build* and *keep* may go to the stirring of feelings that *construct* and *preserve* could never help to enkindle, would lead us into questions of psychology and the relation between language and racial sentiment ; for the least cultured feel at once the incongruity of imported words when used in an appeal to those " simple, sensuous, and passionate " emotions that are at the bottom of all poetry. So that when the late Mr. John Payne, (to whose fine zeal and accomplishment all lovers of that splendid wastrel François Villon are for ever beholden), writes " but I desist," we are conscious at once of a dissonance which no plea of fidelity to the French " Je me désiste "

can altogether palliate. No version of poetry, however faithful, can be good which does not read like poetry : to reproduce a poet's precise wording is a very doubtful need, and in any case an impossible one ; to reproduce *his effect* may be done if we approach the task in prayer and fasting, steadily set on forgetting his actual words as soon as we have mastered their meaning and got the massed sound of them tyrannously resonant in our ears. The best translators of poetry are, indeed, those who are least scrupulous of fidelity in detail ; they slur over the untranslatable, and insinuate new words and turnings of the original thought that are so perfectly in tune with their originals as to render them far less haltingly than meticulous followers of the text. The classic example of the recasting of old matter in a new mould is, of course, Fitzgerald's rendering of the " *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*," where, according to competent witness, the imaginative insight of the translator gave a new lease of life to a work which, on its native merits, was of quite secondary rank in the immortal choirs.

The real task of a translator is that of re-creating, and unless he can bring to his original as much as he takes from it, he had far better leave it alone. To a strict scholar this definition of translation may appear to be just what translation is not ; but, though the makers of mere cribs have their uses, they are not such as concern permanent literature, nor do they help us at all to a relish of its savour.

As an illustration of my argument, I take a sonnet by Joséphin Soulayr, the well-known " *Rêves Ambitieux* " :

Si j'avais un arpent de sol, mont, val ou plaine,  
Avec un filet d'eau, torrent, source ou ruisseau,

J'y planterais un arbre, olivier, saule ou frêne,  
J'y batirais un toit, chaume, tuile ou roseau.

Sur mon arbre, un doux nid, gramen, duvet ou laine,  
Retiendrait un chanteur, pinçon, merle ou moineau ;  
Sous mon toit, un doux lit, harnac, natte ou berceau,  
Retiendrait une enfant, blonde, brune ou châtaine.

Je ne veux qu'un arpent ; pour le mesurer mieux,  
Je dirais à l'enfant la plus belle à mes yeux :  
" Tiens-toi debout devant le soleil qui se lève ;

" Aussi loin que ton ombre ira sur le gazon,  
Aussi loin je m'en vais tracer mon horizon "—  
Tout bonheur que la main n'atteint pas n'est qu'un rêve.

It appears at once that the longer-syllabled line of the French sonnet has a lightness and speed of rhythm that can in no wise be rendered by the staid ten-syllabled line of the English sonnet-form, while the customary French pronunciation of words with a terminal *e*, (when sung to music or recited in verse), unconsciously harking back to the penultimate emphasis of their Italian forbears, gives to *plaine*, *frêne*, *laine*, *châtaine*, *lève*, and *rêve* an effect which is common to those rhymes in English known as double or feminine. Lastly, the sestet opens with an isolated couplet which cannot effectively be paralleled in the English sonnet-form, where such a pairing of rhymes is seldom met with save at the end. To sum up, we find that to give anything like a true echo of the poet's singing we must have (a) a longer line, (b) speedier movement, (c) an interspersion of feminine endings. We can hardly make these last rhyme as Soulayr has done, for such terminals are scarcer in English, and if our lines were so yoked they would be sure to chafe noisily against the coupling. Nor will a right music be got by using the same number of syllables to each line, for English



lines are swayed by stress to a degree undreamt of in French prosody, and we cannot get lightness of movement without sharpness of accentuation.

Next we find that the sentiment to be expressed is the renunciation of all worldly pomp and wealth for the humbler but more perdurable joys of the hearth-stone and heaven's free air. To render *torrent, source ou ruisseau* in English would sound queerly, for we have not that habit of nice differentiation which is always dominant in the best French, and in poetry especially we prefer to hint the thing by its effect rather than to state it specifically. Again, how shall we get the effect of homeliness if we speak of planting an *olive-tree* in our imaginary domain? Would not such husbandry suggest to us the exotic and the sumptuary, known alone to the world that dawdles winter through on the Riviera, returning for the London season to the joys of the Row and the glories of a box at Covent Garden? What would the author have said had he been English? *Thorn-bush*, likely enough; for it is a tree as common with us as olives in Provence, and the staple of those hedgerows that are one of our most widespread joys. And then *enfant* cannot be rendered simply by *child*, for its accompanying adjectives will not reveal the sex as do the French ones: *lassie*, however, will do this for us, and bring with it the right homely accent. Here, then, is our version:

Had I but an acre of loam on hill or valley,  
 Fed by a stream that fell or loitered by,  
 There I'd plant an ash-tree, a thorn-bush or a willow,  
 There I'd build a low roof between me and the sky.  
 On my tree a soft nest, feather-lined or woolly,  
 There should hold a singing-bird—sparrow, finch or merle;  
 Underneath my own roof, a bairnie in the cradle  
 Garlanding the pillow with her brown or yellow curl.

All I want's an acre ; and so to measure rightly,  
I would take the lassie bonniest to me ;  
"Stand thou uprightly"—so should be my bidding—  
"Front the rising sunbeam." So, surely should I see.  
"Far as thy shade on the grassy levels printed,  
Just so far my faring, no farther than the shade's"—  
All the lure of bliss that's far beyond fulfilment  
Holds no more for me than a fickle dream that fades.

And if these few precepts seem to have failed me in my own practice, I would still say with the preacher, "Do as I say, if not as I do," only bidding the translator bring a better skill to the exploit.

## II

## PARTICULAR

THIS much was written before the following collection had been achieved, and it soon became evident to the writer that he was giving but random heed to his own precepts. To take the first point, it is obvious that a rondeau, a ballade, or a villanelle cannot properly be rendered without fidelity to its original form. And despite the example given above, the same rule must generally hold good for the sonnet ; and he would be a bold man who should dare to render Heredia otherwise than in a sequence of eight and six. And where anything in the nature of a refrain appears (as in the stanzas by Samain towards the end of the collection) no version can hope to achieve a right effect without reproducing the premeditated monotony of the original recurrent lines.

Next, it is certainly true in many cases that words of foreign origin are more, rather than less, effective than those of home growth. *Furnace* is more apt

to suggest a spacious horror than *oven*, which calls up only a domestic and somewhat trivial image, though the words be in their root-meaning synonymous. In brief, everything depends upon the suggestion to be conveyed, the nearness or remoteness, whether in time or space, of the atmosphere, and the degree of intimacy or aloofness which the poet puts into the pitch of his voice.

Though my aim has not been to reproduce what has been often, (and always falsely), termed "a line-for-line rendering in the original metre," I must confess to having found it easier to achieve something that is nearer this misleading definition than the more valuable recasting prefigured above. And that is only another way of saying that it is easier to be a scholar than a poet, and a repetition of the disclaimer implied in my sub-title.

So much that is good, (at times unsurpassably so), has been done by Lang, Wyndham, Robertson and others in the past, and by Miss Margaret Jourdain, Mr. Eugene Mason and Mr. Arthur Symons among living workers, (not to mention the occasional triumphs of original poets from Spenser to Swinburne, or of those who have been content to gather from a single furrow of the poetic field), that the present collection must argue some temerity in its maker ; but it had never been attempted had not the difficulties of anthologizing the best versions by other hands been found so nearly insuperable as to lead to despair in the undertaking. Here is an attempt at a representative choice, but the judicious will see that the translator has done what he could rather than what he would, and has sometimes given better credit to the small singer than to the great one. The omission of Ronsard's "*Mignonne, allons voir si la rose*," Vigny's

"Cor," and Leconte de Lisle's "Elfes," (to cite but three among many missing masterpieces), is a tribute to their great qualities rather than a slighting of them. The high proportion of sonnets has seemed justified by the large output and high quality shown in this form throughout nearly the whole period since its introduction, (even Fontenelle writing a good one); for nothing could be more grotesquely untrue than the casual judgment given by the late William Sharp in his introduction to "Sonnets of this Century." But it may be legitimately considered a failing in that some numbers have won their places more *à titre de document* than by intrinsic worth, (either in their original form or in the version offered), and have no better plea for their inclusion. I am sorry for it, but hope that the short period of Lenten fare offered to readers by the products of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, (to which the consensus of cultivated opinion in France gives an importance which we cannot well understand), may only whet their appetites for the rich banquet of the last century. That this period occupies more than one-half of the book would be alone justified by the great names that figure in it; but an epoch of almost universal literacy, while diminishing the chance of our losing any "mute inglorious Milton," renders articulate, if not greater poets, certainly a greater number of them and a more diversified music. Of the work of nearly contemporary writers it can hardly be hoped that the choice here given will be generally considered quite representative; but it is so difficult to keep rightly informed and critically aloof amid the trumpeting and disparagement of rival clans whose activities seem only to bewilder the native doctors, that a mere foreigner may be forgiven for including frankly what happens

to appeal to him, and keeping a barred door whenever the originals seemed to belie their fame or baffle his understanding, or whenever, more happily effectual, he could make no approvable rendering of the beauty they brought him.

In this section, moreover, the copyrights of authors and their publishers have made impossible an unrestricted choice, (already hampered in respect of several Belgian authors by the German occupation of their country, which precluded all negotiation with them) ; but I am glad to acknowledge here the courtesy and kindness of MM. Anatole le Braz, André Fontainas, Paul Fort, Auguste Gaud, Fernand Gregh, André-Ferdinand Hérold, Camille Mauclair, Henri de Regnier, and Francis Vielé-Griffin, who have allowed me to print versions of their poems ; of Mr. Bernard Miall, the authorized English translator of the poems of M. Maeterlinck, and of his publishers, Messrs. Methuen, who confirm his leave to print my one version from the work of that author ; of M. Alphonse Lemerre for a like confirmation in respect of a poem by M. Gaud ; of M. Edmond Guérin, representing the late Charles Guérin ; of M. Albert Mockel, representing, (alone), the late Charles Van Lerberghe and, (jointly with M. Hérold), the late Stuart Merrill ; of Mlle. Louise Read, representing the late Charles Henri Read ; of Mme. Vve. Robert d'Humières, representing her late husband ; and, finally, of M. Alfred Valette, whose unstinting generosity has enabled me to represent a round score of the poets originally presented to the French public by the *Mercure de France*. The dates of first publication have been carefully collated, and it is believed that no piece here appearing lacks proper sanction ; but if, by inadvertence, I should still have taken " French leave," I trust that no un-

kindness may interpret it as an attempt to *filer à l'anglaise*—for I should esteem it an honour for my book to heal feuds rather than to hasten them, and to be a small sign of the sealing in fast friendship of two peoples now drawn closer in a great trial.

## III

## HISTORICAL

**S**AVE for a few numbers appearing as outriders to the procession, and in proof of its anticipation and due heralding, the following pages contain only versions of that poetry which in the widest sense can properly be said to belong to modern French Literature—to the literature, that is to say, which is definitely freed from the mediæval bondage both as regards the language employed and the imaged world in which it delights to move.

The two poets who inaugurate this period are in many ways typical of the two sharply distinguished classes into which men were then divided—the servitor, (as distinguished from the serf), and the overlord or patron. Charles d'Orléans, (1391–1465), the earlier of the two, (and at least a casual patron of the later and unthrifty one), was of the blood royal, and begot a child who became King of France as the twelfth Louis. Born of an Italian mother, the talented Valentine of Milan, he wholly lacked that implacability of worldly pride necessary in an heir to great power. A child when his father was murdered by the Burgundians who challenged his kingship, he seems thereafter to have been no more than flotsam on the tide of political influence of which he should more

properly have been the controller. Simple, melancholy and refined, so far as any one may judge by the wistfulness and most delicate nicety displayed in the medley of laments, prayers, billets-doux, and catches which he has left us, he must have been ill at ease at Azincourt, where he was taken prisoner, being borne thence to England to spend twenty-five years as a hostage of war. His work, cast almost wholly in the very restricted form of the ballade and the rondeau, is seldom less than pretty, while at times perfect ease and aptness of language wedded to sincere, if not very profound, feeling, justify his outstanding importance in the history of a literature that was feeling its way toward a fixed form and a common vocabulary. As was but likely from his station in the world and the tradition of his upbringing, his glance was held rather by the waning glamour of the mediæval age from which men were just then emerging, and his gentle muse finds her best delight in pathways worn for her by its ritual, in a certain sense of courtly behaviour and the unspoiled relish of good fellowship and good cheer. It was these two things of which François Villon, (1431-?), knew but little, if we may judge by the poems which he left behind him, (nearly all of them being directly or implicitly autobiographical), evil fellowship and a bare platter having generally fallen to the lot of this thriftless dependent of Guillaume, priest of the parish of Villon, whose name by adoption he bore. Death as the pitiless pursuer is his predominant theme, and it is not, perhaps, going too far if we explain this obsession by the accidents of a vagabond existence in which the sharp spur of hunger drove him to burgling or the slitting of throats. It may be, of course, that he was wastrel in fibre, and blamed fortune (in ballade metre)

for ills that were due rather to his own evil impulse or instability. However that may be, whatever he wrote bears with it something of a stark sincerity that makes nearly all the work of his contemporaries and forerunners seem no more than pretty fooling. The vagrom feelings which they tangled in a network of nimble conceits Villon felt in his very marrow, and set down wholly without ceremonial trappings ; so that, in spite of being written in a slang common in his day on the lips of cut-throats and street harpies, his work is far and away the most vital produced in his lifetime, or indeed during the hundred years that preceded or that followed it. It is full of the cutting humour of self-contempt and self-pity, with a good deal of sly railing against those betters of whom, as a Master of Arts of the University of Paris, he might once have been counted the equal.

The next hundred years produced no real poet in the sense of creator, though there were a great number of skilled adapters and translators, and in that field of satirical, didactic, allegoric, and dramatic poetry which lies outside our present scope, there were writers of solid worth. Deriving a great deal from all of these, Clément Marot, (1495-1544), exhibited his nimble talent in verses of nearly every kind, the best being, perhaps, the witty dialogues and epigrams full of fine malice and a lively dramatic sense. The learned Mellin de Saint-Gelais, (1487-1558), himself the son of a very learned rhyming bishop, was a writer of occasional verse, and won fame rather from the importance of the people to whom it was addressed than from its intrinsic worth. But he grafted the Italian sonnet on to the stem of French literature, and in this form were written the greater number of the pieces produced by his immediate successors, who, headed by Pierre de



Ronsard, (1524-1585), produced some of the supremest lyrical poetry of which France can boast, all athrob with the triumphant ardour of the Renaissance spirit, which found a new heaven on earth, and another never-failing in the life of antiquity. With a small band of fellow songsmiths calling themselves the "Pléiade," he launched his poetical manifesto "La Défense et Illustration de la Langue Française," in 1549, bearing the signature of Joachim du Bellay, (1525-1560), who, next to himself, was easily the most important poet of the group. This so-called "Défense" boldly took the offensive, inveighed against the mechanical forms of the ballade and the rondeau, and urged writers to the study of Greek and Latin both for the finding of their subjects and the enrichment of their vocabulary, while counselling the abandonment of mere translation. While it must be granted that, in spite of his too plethoric output and a classicism both of subject and vocabulary at times but ill-digested, Ronsard was a supremely perfect singer, he can hardly be acclaimed as of that small clan of great poets whose minds are as great as their music, so that their words lodge deeply in us when the music of them has gone by. His main theme, paraphrased by Herrick in "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may," recurring incessantly with a sameness of physical imagery, finishes by suggesting the enervation of mere bodily sickness. It is true that the idea is expressed with such perfect tenderness of suggestion in one or two pieces that these must be read as long as French is known. He has also an astonishing vigour in giving a living intensity to subjects apparently trite, as in the sonnet in which he proposes to read Homer in three days, or in that other, (triumphantly rendered with so many more by the late George Wyndham), which closes with

two lines admirably illustrating his masterly ease in flashing a sudden glamour on the vision—

As lightning leaps a moment and is lost,  
Or as a cloud wanes out upon the wind.

There is in him, too, an extraordinary sense of physical delight in natural phenomena, such as is only granted to the incorruptible innocence of vision enjoyed by those great artists in whom the springs of childish wonder are never quenched.

Du Bellay, like his friend, was a man of high lineage, and accompanied his cousin the Cardinal on a mission to Rome. Thence came the series of impressive sonnets, some of which were translated with amazing fidelity by his great contemporary Edmund Spenser, and with such perfect propriety of contemporary idiom as no modern writer can hope to come near. Du Bellay died at thirty-five and left far less than Ronsard, but he wrote little that is not exceedingly *fine* in that word's more primitive meaning ; he is easily the most spiritual of the Pléiade, and touched the stops of more various quills than any of his fellows. Sonnets of love, of austere meditation, of religious musing, and of sharpest satire all came from his pen. If we never get with him the hint of coarseness which the more amorous Ronsard but thinly veils, we also find no hint of that robust delight in mere physical well-being which can so transfigure the material world.

With Philippe Desportes, (1545-1606), who after Ronsard's passing took first rank as arbiter of poetic taste, we find already strong signs of the head getting the better of the heart, of emotion being ousted by wit. The complete iconoclast arrived in Malherbe, (1555-1628), who, notwithstanding that his best lines owe everything to that very style of which Ronsard

had been the sire, declared truceless war on the "Pléiade" and all its works, and insisted on verse as regular in construction and as undeviating in sequence of idea as a proposition of Euclid. He and his followers doubtlessly produced fine literature of their own kind, but it is almost wholly without the lyric quality, unless the stateliness of ceremonial pomp be deemed synonymous with it. The luxurious woods and fields of Ronsard were all pruned to the semblance of a trim parterre, and set with marble nymphs that never felt the flutter of a human pulse. The wanton heed and giddy cunning of the lyric poet became the splendidly null perfection of the performer by rote.

Corneille, (1606-1684), and Racine, (1639-1699), Boileau, (1636-1711), and Voltaire, (1694-1778), are all great names in the history of French verse, and at least the two first-named rank as supremely fine artists in their own domain of abstract sentiment divorced from human personality. Their poetry is the flower of a social order by which its expression was very strictly constrained within limits forbidding the incoherence and forthrightness, (and therefore the verisimilitude), of overmastering passion. It is the literature of an aristocratic reserve that is horrified by anything suggestive of a "mauvais ton," and, despite the strength of several subsequent revolutions, many are the Frenchmen whose taste is still bound by its tenets. This is curiously illustrated by the sure signs of their present-day idolaters, for whom they stand as symbols of the old tradition which they love, while the iconoclasts regard them as the discredited oracles of a creed outworn. But the strictness, (not to say narrowness), of thought, and consequently of its literary garb, which culminated in Voltaire, while inducing the nimbleness and circumspection proper

to a tight-rope walker, allowed the poet to move only within as narrow a compass and with as unnatural a gait. The wine of Ronsard's undeniably heady vintage grew steadily drier until it became literally the *vin-aigre* of the cynical Voltaire. La Fontaine, (1621-1695), alone knew how to move easily and with natural grace among the sublime commonplaces that become intolerable unless presented to us insinuatingly and with graphic sureness ; but nothing really gives us any savour of the earth-sprung grape until we come to André Chénier, (1762-1794), who, born at Constantinople of a Greek mother, reclothed the antique legends and idyls in his father's tongue, and died on the scaffold ere his genius had come to full fruition. Using the old rhyming French alexandrines exclusively for these classical subjects, he yet treated them so freshly and gave them such a flavour of sharp delight as to make them as real and as vivid as last night's flower-haunted ballroom or this morning's foursome on the links.

With the dawn of the nineteenth century came a splendour of poetical talent far exceeding all the previous glories of French literature. Alphonse de Lamartine, (1790-1869), the first-born of the new galaxy leading the romantic revival which derived from Rousseau and Chateaubriand, (and hardly less from the poets of our own land), wrote lines of a lyric sweep and moral elevation unsurpassed by any of his forerunners, and but seldom equalled by his followers. He never made a *métier* of poetry, which was no more than a by-product of his diplomatic and political occupations, so that while his verses are full of flaws and not exempt from the ready-made images of the old classical school, there is little that is not suffused with vital feeling—far more feeling,

indeed, than the subject-matter seems sometimes to justify. Though he is brimful of

pure religion breathing household laws,

it is Byron rather than Wordsworth who was his conscious exemplar among the English poets, his admiration, (as later with de Musset), leading him to assume, with an attitude somewhat ludicrously self-conscious and austere, the tinsel-woven mantle of his romantic forerunner. But he sang nobly the alliance between man and the hills that overshadow and the homes that shelter him ; he first made articulate in French poetry, (what in his own majestic way Chateaubriand had already done in prose), the feeling of pious awe for nature as the arena for heroic exploits or the stern corrector of mean ones ; and if he is but little read by the present generation, it is due to the more scientific temper of our time, which resents that particular form of vanity in which its possessor imagines himself the chosen confident and mouth-piece of the Almighty. Veneration for the *foyer*, for the earth as God's footstool, and threshold of a life eternal and beyond human vicissitude, may sum up the whole of a really noble achievement that in our day is apt to be obscured by our keener appetite for what is frankly of the earth or even heaven-defying.

Alfred de Vigny, (1797-1863), is somewhat difficult to place, for though undoubtedly of the Romantic movement, he was never swept away by its main current. By its lofty austerity and contempt of circumstance his work is in sharp contrast to the rather lachrymose parade of self-pity common to Lamartine and de Musset, and links him to the Parnassians, whose work was a counterblast to theirs. English influence counted for much in his development. His

version of "Othello" was given at the Théâtre Français four years after his marriage to an English wife, (a union which repeated, less happily, a like experiment made by Lamartine), and a year earlier than the historic production of Hugo's "Hernani." This, together with his "Chatterton" and the mediævalism of "Le Cor," classes him with his Romantic contemporaries and shows that wistful regard for

old, unhappy, far-off things  
And battles long ago,

which awoke with the dawn of Romanticism, and reminds us that a Gothic revival went hand-in-hand with it. On the other hand, the curious mysticism of "La Maison du Berger" and other pieces has caused him to be claimed as an ancestor of the Symbolists.

Victor Hugo, (1802-1885), son of a general of the first empire, despite his lack of humour, his vanity and his verbosity, is the greatest poet that France has produced, whether for depth and variety of utterance or for mastery of expression. If he failed as novelist and dramatist through his cardinal lack of detachment and restraint, he won his right to a place among the few supreme singers of the world by his work as a lyric, and especially as an epic poet. As the former but few French poets can equal him in any given kind, while none can approach his variety either in subject or in amazing polyphony of orchestration, though it must be admitted that in some of the finer shades of sensibility, (or, more truly, perhaps, of *tact* in treating of them), he is wanting, and sometimes blows his own trumpet so hard as to produce a cracked blast. As an epic poet dealing with historical events still rife in his own land and time, no one can approach him either in his own tongue or in ours, unless we name

one who, dealing with remoter happenings, did in dramatic what Hugo did in narrative poetry, and set him beside that Shakespeare who shone for him as a beacon in the earlier years of the Romantic revolt which he led. Producing throughout the whole period of a long life like a river in spate, his faults are those of superabundance and never of stinting. With his agility of thought and of language, (the second too often and too obviously conditioning the first), he will dazzle with a dozen swift images where a single one had helped to clearer vision. Not till the burden of grief or of wrath lay heavily on him did he completely cast off the shackles of his rhetoric to give the world the heart-cry that sounds in his dirge for his dead daughter, or in his righteous onslaught against the usurping Napoleon III, whose coming drove him into exile for twenty years. His superb "Expiation," with its astoundingly graphic description of the retreat from Moscow and the rout of Waterloo, in a rhyming alexandrine of such masterly rhythm and balance as to make it seem like a new measure after four centuries of hard usage, is sufficient to set him among the great epic poets of all time. Not merely does he flash on the mind's eye such pictures as

Les blessés s'abritaient dans le ventre  
Des chevaux morts ; au seuil des bivouacs desolés  
On voyait des clairons à leur poste gelés,  
Restés debout, en selle et muets, blancs de givre,  
Collant leur bouche en pierre aux trompettes de cuivre,

but the mental agony is seized and set down with equal intensity,

Et, chacun se sentant mourir, on était seul.

It is as though he were so saturated with his subject that the direct expression of what he felt were enough

to ensure truth to the psychology of it. Those four lines beginning *Il neigeait* within the first twenty, and the quiet, laconic, almost ironic couplet with which each section concludes, have the exalted restraint and clarity of supreme art, and strike on the imagination with all the force of concentrated and calculated blows. It may be that the historical perspective is wrong, but posterity is apt to be indifferent to such considerations in view of the sublimity of the poetical vista.

What he had done for an age in "*Les Châtiments*" he achieved for the history of mankind in "*La Légende des Siècles*." Unquenchable compassion for all human suffering and misdoing, with unquestioning faith in man's high destiny, throbs throughout everything he wrote ; but he wrote so much, under such immediate pressure of events, and with such simple belief in his prophetic infallibility, that we may be forgiven for applying to so voluble a singer the words of Omar, and asking if he was always sober when he swore. But the epic Hugo lies without the scope of this volume, if, indeed, not beyond the reach of any translator's art, and I can do no more than offer a mingled posy of his lighter blooms.

Gerard de Nerval, (1808-1855), who rendered "*Faust*" into French very finely, represents the Germanic influence in the Romantic movement of which his own life was by way of a parody, though far from being so meant. A mystic by temperament, he fell on mental disorder and committed suicide, but not before he had coloured the stream of French poetry with a strange and magical infusion with which the work of the later Symbolists was to blend.

Alfred de Musset, (1810-1857), started by following in the footsteps of the early and more narrowly



romantic Hugo, and later, less happily, by *playing at being*

Byron, dans sa tristesse altière.

Voluptuous, witty, an incurable "gamin" who had played with fire and forbidden fruit from adolescence, at twenty-three he fell in with George Sand, six years his senior, escaped from the marriage yoke and already a known flouter of convention by free unions with lovers of her choice. Together they set out for Italy, where continual quarrels, Musset's illness, and George Sand's infidelity with a new-found lover in the doctor who attended him, culminated in rupture, the young poet returning to Paris unaccompanied. This crisis in his life provides the background to all that he subsequently wrote, and its exploitation roused the scorn of Leconte de Lisle, (1818-1894), and the Parnassians, who held with him that poetry should treat of abstract beauty and rise above the stress of private sorrows and their lamentation. As the triumphs and failures of Hugo are largely incident to his position

au centre de tout comme un écho sonore,

so the attitude of Leconte de Lisle bespeaks supreme isolation from the turmoil of humanity, and a horror of that quality of emotion which is facile to grovel or exult, and is quite foreign to any feeling of shame in its self-exposure. In this he begets the great awe and little love that is given to our own aloof Milton, whom also he resembles in the elaboration of his descriptive passages, in his vast array of classical and far-sought illustration, and in a certain monotony of ponderous diction, though, like the great Puritan, he can on occasion surprise us by a shy sally of lyrical song. It is unfortunate that he never condescends

to a footnote or the simplification of his classical or exotic terminology ; for a vast deal of his work assumes in the reader a knowledge of the world's sagas from Iceland to Ceylon, and a close acquaintance with the strange flora and fauna of the tropic zones to which the poet was himself native and amid which he delighted to move. He strove to see all life as an imposing spectacle, himself standing aloof ; but the very deliberation of this attitude renders intenser the emotion conveyed in certain poems which betray his discovery of himself as an agonist in the human drama he had affected to ignore. Beside him, though by chronology and early associations he was allied for a while to the Romantics, we must set Théophile Gautier, (1811-1872), who, beginning life as a painter, has the keen eye for the form and colour of material things which distinguishes the school. They regarded rhyme with reverence as both spur and bridle to Pegasus, and the stricter the bonds the more they rejoiced in them. So we find with them, as with de Banville, (1823-1891), and Heredia, (1842-1905), continual cultivation of such forms as the sonnet, "terza rima," and ballade. They are united, too, in their devotion to antiquity and their hatred of the Middle Ages and the religion identified with the mortification of the sinful flesh, which they preferred to regard as in itself godly. Leconte de Lisle stands for a more deliberate reaction against the extravagancies of Hugo, against his anthropomorphism that saw God's steely glance in every sunbeam and setting a snare about men's feet for ever stumbling between purgatory and paradise ; he expresses the revolt of a pessimist who had little faith in man and none in Providence, whose highest aim was to endure nobly and without complaining till welcome death should

make him one with the glorious but insensible world in which he dwelt as in exile or in expiation. The practice of the school seldom fell below its Spartan precepts, and if Hugo has full need of that indulgent law whereby posterity agrees to remember only what is deathless in a writer's output, these four may almost be allowed to forgo its benefits. The fastidious art of Gautier is the product of a pleasure-loving mind of meridional temper that, robust of appetite for the good things and the smooth things, and the elegant trifles and amenities of human life, was yet the more aghast at the thought of the "abhorred shears"; and, shrinking from present realities, (other than plastic ones), sought what a modern critic has well called "an escape from life" in the contemplation and practice of his art. So, perfect craftsman though he is, he cannot be admitted to supreme rank. But his peculiar quality of visual exactitude, (especially in landscape), served to strengthen the predilection of the Parnassians who followed him; his feeling for delicate detail was like a spring rain to the seed of de Banville's fancy; and his shiver at corruption passed into the shudders that, with deeper feeling and sublimer imagery, became articulate in Baudelaire. De Banville is the will-o'-the-wisp of French poetry; he links the lightest of fancies and the slightest of emotions into a gossamer of rhyme; his thought is as flimsy as may be, and his emotion a light wanton obedient to the beck and call of his line endings; but his winsome grace and freshness make such considerations appear wholly insidious and irrelevant while we are under the spell of their delightful artifice.

It is doubtful whether any single poet has ever reached such high rank as Heredia with so small a volume of work. His emotion is mainly that of a

connoisseur—a calm intensity of detached delight in no way involving the heart's surrender—and it is expressed in pondered artistry of the most exquisite kind. He will give you a whole civilization in a sonnet, but only because he has first become steeped in the sentiment of its era, especially as shown by its visual embodiment in forms of material pomp and magnificence. As Hugo in "La Légende des Siècles" had given us a series of historical pictures from the dawn of Time down to the era of the great Napoleon, so Leconte de Lisle, seeking more exotic themes, and without Hugo's preoccupation with what the younger poet would have termed "sham and sensuous religiosity," gave us a series of heroic frescoes drawn in hard, stupendous outline by an artist almost inhumanly impassive, who sat

as God holding no form of creed  
But contemplating all,

and recording phenomena with Olympian detachment and completeness. It is Heredia's glory to have filled in these outlines with the richest of colouring and the most elaborate ornamentation, for of Leconte de Lisle's cardinal part he is but the development and culmination, gathering in intensity and concentration what he loses in range and scope. There is hardly a flaw in any of the hundred and eighteen sonnets which, (with two longer but less important narrative pieces), fill his only volume. Each sonnet presents a complete picture to which every word adds a touch of colour, and if, after persistent reading, the manner of its making becomes a little obvious, and the manœuvring preliminary to the triumphant rally of his fourteenth line ceases to impose upon the reader, that is perhaps no more than an inherent defect of the

restricted medium in which he chose to write. Noon on the Nile two thousand years ago, Siesta in the tropic sunlight, Hannibal musing after victory, the Samurai full-armed for battle, are seen and set down with such intense clarity and completeness that each sonnet might be termed an alembic holding in little all the essentials of an epoch. His work sometimes suffers from a too aboriginal delight in mere gauds and the unattainably expensive, (just as a thousand visitors to the Tower will stand agape over the Crown jewels for one who will examine the graving of human sorrow on its walls) ; so that one sonnet will sound like a rhymed inventory of some antique looter for whom no item is a token of noble living now made dust, while another will paint the lily and gild the gold of sunrise at Constantinople with such extravagance of hue that the result is at once magnificent and preposterous. From this failing his master's abiding sense of futility restrained him.

Allied to these by a scrupulous devotion to form was Charles Baudelaire, (1821-1867), whose æsthetic sensibility went along with a curious spirit of analysis which he shared with Edgar Alan Poe, whose tales he translated. He was fond of experimenting in the morbid, and in the end fell a victim to his appetite for sensation, his death being a happy release from the mental paralysis which had overwhelmed him. Like Poe, he saw the skeleton at every feast with a vision unthwarted by the beauty that enthralled him—a beauty whose flame consumes the soul that it illumines, making victims of its adorers. The two were akin again in their fondness for recurrent lines, like the restless haunting of accusing voices, though it is true that this may have been suggested to Baudelaire by the Malay "pantoum," a form to which

Leconte de Lisle also subdued his lofty mind. As the creator of mental images through the medium of the most superfine nervous sensations, he is one of the most direct forerunners of the Symbolists. Though nervous sensibility wrought havoc on his fleshly part, his spiritual gaze never lost sight of the reality that lies behind appearances ; and if he was the conscious slave to them, the real man, (in spite of a blatant dissembling), was a rebel to the bondage, and could not wholly stifle the cry that sounds ever and anon like Faust's in bitter anguish for his bartered heaven. Born of a sire already turned three-score, the pride of the flesh and the delight of the eye tortured him with a wild appetite for conquests that were beyond the enjoyment of his impoverished blood : hence came the superb allure and strange nostalgia of forbidden fruit that haunt his verses ; hence too in bitter spite, perhaps spurred on by the inarticulate presentiment of an early exhaustion, came the joyless quest of emotional excesses that led only to satiety.

To the Parnassian school belongs also Sully Prudhomme, (1839-1907), by his adherence to strict form, though we must agree with Leconte de Lisle that he is not quite " *de la maison*," owing to his exploitation of those intimate heart-searchings which his great chief regarded with so much disfavour. One of the most typical poets of his time, without any marked endowment of lyrical power, but with extreme sensibility and perfect craft and delicacy of self-analysis, he was able to express with touching sincerity the ordeal of a soul despairing of guidance in a world which had lost its power of trusting the old sanctions and prohibitions in which present happiness and eternal salvation were once to be found. Endowed with all the facility and adaptability which Sully

Prudhomme lacked, Catulle Mendès, (1842-1909), might have often achieved greatness had he shown the strength and stubbornness proper to an original mind that beats out its own music without stooping to mimic its betters. His house was, towards 1866, a rallying-point for all those who marched under the Parnassian banner ; he married a daughter of Gautier, and shared the faith which he continued to profess, (if not always to practise), even down to 1900, when he wrote :

Car il n'est poème au parfait aloï  
Qui ne soit la fleur d'une stricte loi,

Car même le vol infini de l'aigle  
Suit à travers cieux l'orbe d'une règle.

Paul Verlaine, (1844-1896), began as a Parnassian, but was afterwards regarded as the leader of the Symbolist school that aimed at the greatest freedom as regards prosody and pretended to set down nothing as a mere fact but everything as a symbol of something beyond itself. Absolute surrender to the vagrom mood without the sophistication of any conscious moral or intellectual purpose beyond its sincere and melodious expression was the whole of his gospel ; and to him the symbolism was really no more than incidental and implied, phenomena taking on whatever character the momentary emotion of the singer imputed to them. It fitted the man who was impulsive as a child, and subject to sensuous impressions and suggestions, to sudden passions, devotions, angers and sorrows, celestial and of the slime, which the normal man outgrows. Baudelaire's

Je haie le mouvement qui déplace les lignes

did not allow that unquestioning compliance with the stress and urgency of feeling which Verlaine demanded

of the Muse. His was a more comfortable doctrine for those who would shirk the

austères études

on which the elder poet insisted ; but its right application required a fineness of sensory perception and a responsiveness thereto which can hardly survive childhood, together with enough intelligence to render it significant, and a wealth of metrical invention beyond all reckoning. Child as he was, and musical as a reed, even Verlaine but seldom fulfilled all these conditions ; nor did he ever practise such metrical freedom as the theory seems to predicate. His work is remarkable for its naïve candour of close confidence, which makes every poem a bulletin of the sick soul as surely as the medical chart above a sick man's pillow serves to that end for his ailing body. Only his grace and sincerity save him from being intolerably maudlin, and make his appeal as difficult to resist as the babble of a repentant child.

The poetry of moods and sensations, the creation of atmosphere without any care for coherence, was the too consciously cultivated purpose of the Symbolist Stéphane Mallarmé, (1842-1898), most of whose writings mean nothing at all or suggest everything, according as you read them or into them—whatever you will. Here it is not the emotion that dominates the fancy and creates it ; but to the wanderings of rudderless fancy you must fit whatever emotions seem best to give purpose to their erratic course. It is somewhat like watching the gestures of a man through a pane of frosted glass without knowing the room that is behind it nor the occupation of its tenant, and trying to guess what is the matter that holds him there and the purpose of his movements. In form



Mallarmé is Parnassian ; but he so clouded the Pierian spring before sipping from it that it is difficult for any but a neophyte not to find in his work an elaborate form of *blague*, not the less mischievous for the fact that he was himself the dupe of it. His sin as a poet, (for his earlier work shows that he was capable of true ecstasy), consists of an intellectual pride that made him disdain surrender to impulse and prefer the analysis of it ; he never gives us his emotion in the full ardour of fusion but only in a dead precipitate. And the matter is complicated by his scholarship and a consequent adoption of an alien syntax, so that he came to write in a sort of cipher of which himself alone held the key. As a protest both against the excessive ritual and visual exactitude of the Parnassians and the loudness and over-emphasis of Hugo, this literature of hints and half-tones seeing everything, as Amiel saw landscape, as an " *état d'âme*," and surrendering completely to the suggestions imposed by it, had a valuable influence, though it was too often weakened by followers who sought the cover of its haze for their own incompetence. The movement was finally dissipated in a superstitious type of mock-simple animism not far removed from silliness. The fact that the two most complete Parnassians were Creoles while Symbolism found its aptest exponents among northern men, and especially among the Belgians, is not without significance as suggesting in climate a source of the æsthetic manifestation natural to the hard glitter and sharp outline of tropic countries and the mistiness and changeability of chilly ones. And it is worth noticing that Symbolism synchronized with the rise of Impressionism in French painting, and, like its sister art, derived largely, if indirectly, from English sources.

From the Symbolists or the Parnassians, not seldom from both—starting with the mutinous vanguard and falling later into the ranks of the old tradition—most of the more recent poets derive, though among the more interesting are those who are most restive under the old yoke and strike out a new furrow through clay that has been long neglected, getting into closer touch with the commoner hopes and sentiments of workaday men by affecting the simplicity of a time when printing was still unlearned and the folk-song still unforgotten, before the pause and stress derived from a musical notation had been ousted by the more stately monotony of declamatory verse. Along with this has gone a flouting of Academic ordinance by making the ear the final arbiter both of rhythm and of rhyme, and ignoring the merely visual signs of these in the printed word where they are no longer confirmed by the tongue's delivery as heard in familiar speech.

London, April 1917



## BOOK I

À  
MONSIEUR LE DOYEN  
À  
MESSIEURS LES PROFESSEURS  
DE LA FACULTÉ DES LETTRES  
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE  
GRENOBLE  
EN HOMMAGE RECONNAISSANT

## ANONYMOUS

(12th Century)

### I. THE TWA SYSTRES

THE mirk did fa' lang syne, lang syne  
When twa fond systres wi' hands that twine  
Went down to bathe whaur the waters shine.  
*Blaw wind, bend beugh in the stormy weather,  
They that be leel sleep saft taegither.*

A ladde rode by as the red sun dipt,  
He saw her white whaur the waters whipt.  
He tookit her straught in hys airms and clipt.  
*Blaw wind, bend beugh in the stormy weather,  
They that be leel sleep saft taegither.*

• “Noo systre deare, wheri full's your skeel  
Gang hame by the road that ye ken weel.  
I bide wi' him that is my ain leel.”  
*Blaw wind, bend beugh in the stormy weather,  
They that be leel sleep saft taegither.*

Then wan wi' dule she greeted there  
Wi' drouned een and hairt maist sair  
To gang wi' her systre nevermair.  
*Blaw wind, bend beugh in the stormy weather,  
They that be leel sleep saft taegither.*

“Alas ! she cried, “wae's me ! wae's me !  
She leaves me lain whaur the waters be

To follow her ladde to his ain countree.''  
*Blaw wind, bend beugh in the stormy weather,*  
*They that be leel sleep saft taegither.*

They turned them then nor touchit groun'  
 Till they rode into the far-off toun  
 And there were blest wi' the priest abune.  
*Blaw wind, bend beugh in the stormy weather,*  
*They that be leel sleep saft taegither.*

## GUIOT DE DIJON

(13th Century)

### 2. THE LAYE OF THE LADYE OF FAEL

FOR myne owne courage will I synge  
 That I maye soothe and strengthen it ;  
 For spite of all my sufferynge  
 I will not die nor lose my wit,  
 Though from that land of heathen shame  
 No home-come pilgrym I doe meet,  
 Where nowe he is whose spoken name  
 Doth make my sad heart wildly beat.

Godde ! when the cry is " Charge amayne ! "  
 O guard the pilgrym lest he fall  
 For whom I suffer soe great payne.  
 For Saracens are felons all.

Until the slowe yeare round shall swynge,  
 I will endure without assuage.  
 O ! safe from peril Godde hym brynge  
 Back from hys holie pilgrymage.

And, spite of all my kindred saye,  
Myne owne true love I will not quit  
To cleave unto another claye ;  
And mad is he that sayeth it.

Godde! when the cry is " Charge amayne! "  
O guard the pilgrym lest he fall  
For whom I suffer soe great payne.  
For Saracens are felons all.

## JEHANNOT DE LESCUREL

(14th Century)

### 3. BALLADE

FAYRE, in loyaltie  
I thee love; love me.  
I will serve thee aye,  
Never will I straye  
From thy companie.  
Love could never flit  
For he hath not wit  
Howe to fynde a waye:  
Nowe, by Goddes faye!  
Ladye, laye thy laughynge mouth  
On myne owne I praye.

Fayre the gyft. I trowe,  
An thou doe bestowe,  
That thy heart is myne;  
Then shall I be thyne  
More and more alsoe.



Gentle ladye tell  
 If thou fynde me well  
 And sweet love have swaye:  
 Nowe, by Goddës faye!  
 Ladye, laye thy laughynge mouth  
 On myne owne I praye.

Fayre of face art thou.  
 Never cheek and browe  
 Could I kiss enough;  
 An I won thy love,  
 'Twere an end of woe.  
 Soe that I may wit  
 If thou grant me it,  
 And thou wilt me paye:  
 Nowe, by Goddës faye!  
 Ladye, laye thy laughynge mouth  
 On myne owne I praye.

## JEAN FROISSART

(1337-1410)

### 4. RONDEAU OF HYS LADYE

SOE blithe am I when I a rose doe smell;  
 Soe full of bliss when I my Ladye see;  
 Of twayne one onlye soothes the heart of me:  
 Soe blithe am I when I a rose doe smell.  
 Sweet is the scent; whereas her sighte doth quell  
 My heart soe that myne eyes ashaméd be:  
 Soe blithe am I when I a rose doe smell,  
 Soe full of bliss when I my Ladye see.

## 5. RONDEAU OF FARE-WELL

My bodye goes; I leave wyth thee my heart.  
Ladye most deare, fare-well till I ryde home.  
Ah! woe is me that I soe far must roam:  
My bodye goes; I leave wyth thee my heart.  
But sweet remembrances shall soothe the smarte  
All the sad whyle till back to thee I come:  
My bodye goes; I leave wyth thee my heart.  
Ladye most deare, fare-well till I ryde home.

## EUSTACHE DESCHAMPS

(1340-1410)

## 6. BALLADE OF PENTECOST

ON high Pentecost I found  
In thys gracious month of Maye,  
Her to whom my heart is bound  
In a garden faire a-straye,  
Pluckyng roses. I did saye  
"Kyss me." "Gladlye," she reply'd.  
In thys wise Love hadde hys waye,  
With a rose on either syde.

Since her love me comforted  
Doubt and fear are driven awaye;  
Now with Hope I ever tread  
On that garden of deare claye.  
Hence her gentle leave and aye  
Fond desirés that abyde

Still as sweet as when we laye  
With a rose on either syde.

Her sweet kyss hath driven oute  
More of grief than I can saye;  
All my sorrowe and my doubte  
Now is soothéd by her swaye.  
I doe bless the houre and daye  
Found me thus soe faire a bryde  
Kissynge in soe kynde a waye,  
With a rose on either syde.

Prince, thys ladye on a daye  
I did fynde for mate and bryde;  
There and then I kyssed my faye  
With a rose on either syde.

#### 7. RONDEAU OF SOLDIERHOOD

SUMMER'S the time for soldierhood,  
Or Spryng when all the grass is high  
And sunbeams make old Winter fly:  
The chargers then fynde forage good,  
And ground is smooth wheron to lie.  
Summer's the time for soldierhood,  
Or Spryng when all the grass is high.  
Then snowe is thawn from wold and wood,  
And pilgryms synge as they goe bye.  
Then take thy speare with shield a-nigh,  
Summer's the time for soldierhood,  
Or Spryng when all the grass is high  
And sunbeams make old Winter fly.

## CHRISTINE DE PISAN

(1363-1430)

## 8. BALLADE OF SPRYNGE-TYME

NOWE cometh the soe gracious month of Maye  
That is ryghte gladsome, she that doth bestowe  
Such sweetnesse; nowe be fields and woods growne gaye  
With leaves and floures that doe blithelye blowe.  
In all thynges joye hath swaye.  
Nowe greene the meadowe is and eke the spraye,  
And all thynges nowe forswear their sorrowynge  
For the faire boone this merrye month doth  
brynge.

The birds goe singynge a glad roundelaye,  
And all thynges the like happinesse doe knowe;  
But woe is me that suffer such dismaye,  
For wanderynge love begetteth onelye woe;  
Nowe me joye cannot swaye,  
Who growe in sorrowe as tyme groweth gaye.  
Lovers well knowe how sharper grief can styng  
For the faire boone this merrye month doth  
brynge.

Nowe doe I weep, lamentynge nighte and daye  
Him whom I lack, and who doth nought bestowe;  
Nowe Love's worst onset that comes nigh to slaye,  
His feints and torments I doe sadlye knowe.  
In this sweet tyme alwaye  
I have noe joye who am despoiled aye  
Of that desire wherto soe firm I clynge  
For the faire boone this merrye month doth  
brynge.

## 9. RONDEAU OF SECRET SORROWE

HOWE hard a thyng it is to dree

When heart doth weep and mouth must synge,

When grief must hyde from companie

Howe hard a thyng it is to dree.

Yet some must mask their miserie

Lest honour be a smirched thyng:

How hard a thyng it is to dree.

## ANONYMOUS

(15th Century)

## 10. FOLK SONG

WHAT shall I doe if love me leave ?

Night and daye I cannot sleepe.

For my lover I doe grieve

When unto my bed I creepe.

Then I rise with bodye bare

And doe on my robe of graye;

Glidyng down a secret stayre,

Thro' the grove I wend awaye.

There the merry larke doth synge,

And the nightingale doth crye

In his prettye jargonyng,

“ See these lovers farynge bye,

“ On the river in a boat  
Movynge on her stately waye,

“ With a satin saile a-float  
And with silken cordes for staye.

“ The tall maste is ivorie,  
And the rudder golden pale;

“ From a far awaye countrie  
Come the lads that trim the saile.

“ One that bears the Fleurs-de-Lys  
Is the Kynge of France’s sonne,

“ And the other lad, I wis  
Is my owne belovéd one.”

## CHARLES D'ORLÉANS

(1391-1465)

### II. BALLADE

O PRAYE for peace, sweet mayde Marie  
High Queene of Heaven and world’s mistrésse,  
Make praye your holy companie  
By gentle favour, and adresse  
Your Sonne that from his loftinesse  
He maye his wayward people heede  
For whom in ransom he did bleede,  
Nowe prone for warre that wasteth all;  
O praye and never cease to plead  
That peace, joy’s treasure, maye befall.

Praye priests and who live holilie;  
Sleeke friars leave your slothfulnesse;  
Praye learned men lest warre should be  
That setteth studie in sore stresse;  
The ruined shrine you shall not blesse  
Who there nor missal write nor read,  
Nor followe where Lord Godde doth lead.  
Then loudly nowe upon Hym call,  
For soe ordaineth church and creed)  
That peace, joy's treasure, maye befall.

Praye Princes who hold landes in fee,  
Kynges, Dukes, Earls, all of knightly fesse,  
And gentlemen of chivalrie,  
Lest churls o'ercome your gentlenesse;  
In graspynge hands your wealth growes lesse,  
From hot dispute and evil greede,  
As you maye see. O intercede,  
(For they growe proude and rich with all  
Wherwith your people you should feede)  
That peace, joy's treasure, maye befall.

Praye folk that bear hard tyrannie,  
For sore is your lords' feeblenesse  
Who cannot holde their masterie  
Nor help you in your evil stresse;  
Praye merchant in sore paine noe lesse,  
Too long a-straddle on your steede,  
(For you noe more afar maye speede  
To barter in the baron's hall,  
Such peril doth the highwaye breede)  
That peace, joy's treasure, maye befall.

Lord Godde Almightye doth us heede.  
From Earth, Sky, Ocean, in our neede

Let prayer rise unto Him from all,  
Who only can amend ill deede,  
That peace, joy's treasure, maye befall.

## 12. RONDEAU

HOWE comely hath Godde made her be,  
Gracióus and goode and fair of moulde  
That every man her doth beholde  
Must prayse her soul's consistencie.  
For who could tire of such as she  
Whose lovelinesse doth aye unfolde?  
Howe comely hath Godde made her be,  
Gracióus and goode and fair of moulde.  
Nor can I fynde by lande or sea,  
Or virgin maid or matron olde  
As doth such perfect graces holde;  
The thought of her is dream to me:  
Howe comely hath Godde made her be!

## 13. RONDEAU

MYNE only love, my joye, my boone,  
More deare to me than ought beside,  
I prithee joyously doe bide  
In hope that I maye see thee soone.  
I seeke a waye by nighte, by noone,  
To come to thee, if Godde me guide,  
Myne only love, my joye, my boone,  
More deare to me than ought beside.  
And if, by wishynge it, my shoone  
Maye brynge me nigh thee, nought denied  
Of all that under heav'n doth hide,  
Shall sette me crynge for the moone  
Myne only love, my joye, my boone.



## 14. BALLADE

WITHIN the forest of sad wearinesse

One daye uncompanied I chanced to wend,  
And therin did encounter love's Goddésse  
Who made me question of my journey's end.  
To whom I told howe Fortune did me rend  
And drive awaye into the woodland close,  
That not miscalled a man maye be, soe penned,  
A man astraye that knowes not where he goes.

She, smilynge in her soe great kindlinesse,  
Made answer to me, "Did I knowe, deare friend,  
Wherfor thou farest in soe sore distresse,  
Myne aid to thee I willyngly would lend;  
Since, long agoe I did thy heart intend  
For pleasant wayes, whom malice misbestowes,  
And much it grieveth me to see thee wend,  
A man astraye that knowes not where he goes."

"Alas!" said I, "O sovereign princesse,  
Hear thou my plight and hearken to the end:  
'Tis Death hath done me this dire hurtfulnessse,  
And taken from me my belovéd friend  
In whom my hope was; she who did attend  
To guide me, in my farynge ever close;  
Whose like nowe is not, wherfor I doe wend  
A man astraye that knowes not where he goes.

"Syghtlesse, I goe a journey without end;  
And, lest that I should stumble I doe send  
My staff before me with unsteady blowes.  
And pitiful it is that I must wend,  
A man astraye that knowes not where he goes."

## 15. RONDEAU

TYME hath throwne downe the robe he bare  
Of winde and cold and chillye rayne,  
And nowe with sunbeams cleare agayne  
In lordlye raiment doth he fare.  
Each beast and birde doth nowe declare  
Harsh-voiced or smoothe the tidynges playne:  
Tyme hath throwne downe the robe he bare  
Of winde and cold and chillye rayne.  
Nowe fountaynes, streams and brookes repair  
Their sheeny floods that downward drayne  
With gold and silver in their trayne;  
All thynges new vesture nowe doe weare:  
Tyme hath throwne downe the robe he bare.

## 16. RONDEAU

SALUTE for me the fellowe-ship  
Nowe met together joyouslie,  
And saye howe gladlye I would be  
Beside them where the flagons dip;  
But old Age hath me in his grip,  
And dried the sap of youth in me:  
Salute for me the fellowe-ship  
Nowe met together joyouslie.  
Tyme was I loved a wench's lip,  
And all my veins did dance with glee  
That nowe be taut with miserie,  
Soe tightly held in ague's grip:  
Salute for me the fellowe-ship.

## FRANÇOIS VILLON

(1431- ? )

17. FROM THE GREATER TESTAMENT  
(XXXVIII-XLI)

I KNOWE full well I am noe saynte  
 That moves in heaven's starrie zone  
 Star-crownéd beyond mortal taynte.  
 My father's dead; beneath the stone  
 He lies whose soule to Godde is flowne.  
 I knowe my mother too must die—  
 She's well aware of it, poor crone—  
 And her son's lyfe doth hasten bye.

I knowe that all men, rich and poor,  
 Wyse men and foolish, priest and churl,  
 Niggards and who keep open door,  
 Tall, short, fair, uglye, serf and earl,  
 And every hussyf, wench, or girl  
 In fillet bound, or hooded tall  
 With flaps that round the collar curl,  
 By Death are seized one and all.

And Paris dies and Helen dies,  
 And each in dyinge hath such payne  
 That all his breath out of him flies,  
 And gall over his heart doth drayne;  
 And then he sweats, Godde knowes! amayne,  
 And theryn hath but little ease,  
 For none of all his kin be fayne  
 To bear for him his agonies.

Death leaves him shudderynge and growne wan,  
His nose down-curved, his veins displayed,  
His neck all puffed, flesh smooth to span,  
With nerves and joints all wracked and frayed;  
And woman too, soe tender made,  
Soe soft, soe smooth bye breast and thyghes,  
Aye, even she must thus be laid,  
Or else fare straighte to Paradyse.

18. THE BALLADE OF LOVELY LADYES OF  
LONG AGOE

O TELL me where and in what lande  
Is Flora and the Roman lass?  
Where's Thais or the Ladye grande  
That was her equal in all grace?  
Saye where doth Echo hyde her face  
Whose voice bye streame and pool doth straye,  
Whose beauty more than mortal was?—  
But where are the white snowes borne awaye?

Where nowe is learned Heloise  
For whom poor Abelard lost all  
Quick fuel of love's agonies,  
And answered toe the holye call?  
Likewyse I aske what doth befall  
The Queene that Buridan did slaye,  
Flung to the Seine for burial?—  
But where are the white snowes borne awaye?

Queene Blanche as anye lily wan,  
Whose voice was sweet as syrens fayne:  
Berte, Bice, Alice loved of man,  
Or Ermengarde that ruled in Mayne?

Or Jean the goode lass from Lorrayne  
 Burnt by the Englysh rabble? Saye  
 Where are they Virgin Sovereigne?—  
 But where are the white snowes borne awaye?

Prince, not thys weeke, thys year shall deigne  
 To thee their hidynge to betraye;  
 The only answer thou shalt gaine—  
 But where are the white snowes borne awaye?

19. FROM THE GREATER TESTAMENT  
 (XXII, XXIII, AND XXVI)

I DOE bemoan my youthful sinne  
 And the steep road I hurried bye  
 Until I met old Age therin  
 That hid youth's going from myne eye.  
 Nought of his footsteps I descrye  
 Nor palfrey's hoof-prints. How went he?  
 As sudden as a bird doth flye,  
 And left me nought but beggarye.

He is fled awaye and I am left  
 Who little knowe nor understand,  
 Less ripe than rotten, all bereft  
 Of mirth and money, house and land.  
 I bear upon me the harsh brand  
 Of mine own kind who from the fold  
 Doe drive me with unkindlye hand  
 Because I have but little gold.

Ah! Godde, hadde I in my wild youth  
 But studied well and walked arighte,  
 I mighte have hadde an house in sooth  
 And lain between warm sheets o' nighte.

But, naye! from school I took my flighte  
As anye naughtye ladde will doe.

Nowe when these woeful words I write  
My heart comes nigh to break in two.

20. FROM THE GREATER TESTAMENT  
(LXXVI-LXXIX)

I GIVE my bodye untoe her that gatte  
Our grandam earth; theron, though worms maye bite  
Untoe the bone, they shall fynde little fatte,  
Soe long hath hunger fought a winnyng fighte.  
Straighte to the earth let it be borne outrighte:  
From earth that came, to earth at last doth come;  
For everythyng, unlesse my pen mys-write,  
To its owne place at laste goes gladlye home.

Untoe my more than father haplye founde,  
William of Villon, him who was more milde  
Untoe the babe in swaddlyng raiment bounde  
Than ever Mother bye her sonne beguiled;  
Him that did save me from adventures wilde  
Full often—I doe give, lest he forgette  
Or else be loth to praye for his dead childe,  
The score of books within my cabinet.

Untoe this godlye man likewise I will  
The tale that at my biddynge Tabarie  
Did cople out in large script with his quill,  
Than whom was never man more trustworthye.  
In quires beneath the table dustilye  
It lies, and though the laboured style wherwith  
'Tis written be a hindrance, all, pardie!  
May be forgiven for the matter's pith.

Untoe my Mother,—for her soul's relief  
 That therewith on our Ladye she maye call,  
 Who for my sinnes hath had much bitter grief  
 God knoweth, and much sorrowynge withal;  
 Noe other castel have I nor strong wall  
 Whertoe my bodye and my soul maye flee  
 When on my path a-manye perils fall,  
 Nor my poor Mother hath no more than me :—

21. BALLADE MADE FOR HIS MOTHER THAT  
 SHE MIGHTE PRAYE TOE OUR LADYE

LADYE of heaven that o'er earth hath swaye  
 And of Hell's marshes art most Royal Reeve,  
 Grant toe thy humble Christian that doth praye,  
 To be of those thy virtue doth retrieve.  
 Though all unworthye of thy great reprieve,  
 Ladye and mistresse whom I worship well,  
 Yet can thy virtues save my soul from Hell  
 Despite my sinfulness, and purge the offence \*  
 Soe that I win to heaven. Truth I tell:  
 And in this faith I live and will goe hence.

Tell toe thy Sonne that I am his; my shame  
 I bear untoe him to be purged of sinne.  
 Forgive me even as the Egyptian dame  
 Or as the clerk Theophilus who did win  
 Thy pardon and a new life did begin,  
 Though he hadde given his soul in bond to Hell.  
 Guard me, O Virgin, from foul Satan's spell  
 Soe that the holye bread I taste, nor thence  
 Be driven, till Tyme sounde my passynge bell:  
 And in this faith I live and will goe hence.

I am but a poor old woman whose dim eyes  
 That lack book-learning, do with joy behold  
 Within the church a painted Paradyse  
 With harps and eke with lutës manifold;  
 Therunder a huge cauldron wherín roll'd  
 The damnéd seethe for ever in deep Hell,  
 The which I fear. O Goddesse, let me dwell  
 Where joy is. Thou, the sinner's sure defence,  
 Fill me with faith, and all my sloth dispell:  
 And in this faith I live and will goe hence.

Thou barest, Virgin Princesse, without stain,  
 Jesus the Kynge that doth for ever reign.  
 The Almightye, seeinge us in thrall to Hell,  
 Didde give his deare sonne for our soul's offence  
 To die, and from the heavens where he doth dwell,  
 Our Lord did brynge salvation as I tell:  
 And in this faith I live and will goe hence.

22. EPITAPH IN BALLADE FORM WHICH VIL-  
 • LON MADE FOR HIMSELF AND HIS FEL-  
 LOWES, EXPECTYNGE TO BE HANGED  
 ALONG WITH THEM

O BROTHER men that live when we have end,  
 Let not your hearts 'gainst us be hardenynge;  
 For if on us your pitie ye doe spend,  
 Likewyse to you shall Godde be pitynge.  
 Here maye ye see our six lean trunks a-swyng,  
 And our dead flesh that, livynge, we o'er-fed  
 Plucked out bye bits and rottynge toe to head,  
 While we, bare bones, to ash and dust be come.  
 From our ill hap let noe man's mirth be bred,  
 But praye Godde to absolve us of our doome.



If, brother men, we call, beyond amend,  
Disdayne us not for our sore trespassynge,  
For well ye knowe howe manye men doe wend  
On evil wayes thro' witless wanderynge;  
But intercession for our soules doe brynge  
Untoe the Holye Virgin's Sonne instead,  
That He of His deare grace have still toe shed  
Withal wherby to save us from Hell's fume.  
Let noe man nowe misuse us, being dead,  
But praye Godde to absolve us of our doome.

The rayne hath bleached us all from end to end  
The sunne hath scorched us to a blackened stryng  
Mag-pyes and crowes our hollowe eyes doe rend,  
Or snatch what hair bye beard or browe doth clynge.  
And ever without cease we swaye and swynge,  
Like monstrous spindles ever flutteréd,  
By the wind's shiftye humours sore bestéd,  
Peck't close bye all the birds that us consume  
As anye thimble. Ware the waye we tread,  
But praye Godde to absolve us of our doome.

Prince Jesus, Lord of all, or live or dead,  
O save us from infernal serfage dread,  
That have nor help nor holdynge in Hell's gloome.  
Men, mock not what in bitter truth is said,  
But praye Godde to absolve us of our doome.

### 23. HIS OWNE EPITAPH

ETERNAL rest on him bestowe,  
O Lord, and everlastynge light,  
Who lacked withal for sup or bite,  
Shorn close on scalp and chin and browe,

Who was scrap't bare and smooth, I trowe  
As any turnip round, poor wighte:  
Eternal rest on him bestowe.  
Hard doome befell him here belowe,  
Drove forth and smote him in sore spite,  
Though "I appeal!" he cried with mighte,  
A form of speech that's playne enowe:  
Eternal rest on him bestowe.

## MELLIN DE SAINT-GELAIS

(1487-1558)

### 24. OF HYS LADYE

NOT all the shippes bye Venice quay,  
Nor oyster-shells bye Norman shore,  
Nor all the swannes in Temmes that be  
With archéd neck and ebon oar,  
Can reach the tallie of her lore.

Not wooinges made in holye guise,  
Nor pryde of princelynges got from Spayne,  
Nor all the lure of cunnyng lies,  
Nor all the golde that misers gaine,  
Can match the brightnesse of her brayne.

Not all the beasts bye man untamed,  
Nor all the wiles of warrynge men,  
Nor all reprieves bye Rome proclaimed,  
Nor all the words ere writ by penne,  
Can halve the wisdom in her kenne.

**MARGUERITE DE NAVARRE**

(1492-1549)

**25. DIZAIN TO CLÉMENT MAROT**

IF but your creditors, the which you chyde,  
Did knowe as I the worth of your rare wit,  
Of all your dettes you might full soon be quit  
Or great or smalle, whatever still maye byde;  
If each did holde a dizain duly writ,  
What sum soever the full worth of it  
Would then be his by thousands multiplied.  
The worth of money maye by weight be tolde,  
But none maye knowe what guerdon doth befit  
Such skill as yours beyond all worth of gold.

**CLÉMENT MAROT**

(1495-1544)

**26. DIZAIN IN ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING**

MY dunnes that untoe dizains give smalle care,  
Did read your owne. Wheron I say'd, " You see,  
My noble Michael, noble Luckyfare,  
The Kynge's owne sister doth soe honour me."  
Straightwaye they deemed me of stabilitie,  
And rained " Your worships" and " Respected Sirs."  
Thus was your script to me as golden ore,  
For they did promise respyte—nay, they swore  
To let me fill—for promises—my purse  
While I did sweare to borrowe—as before.

## 27. OF THE ABBOT AND HIS VALET

HIS grace the Abbot and his servynge ladde  
Are of one claye as honey is of wax;  
One is a loon, the other one is madde;  
One loves a joke, the other his sides cracks;  
One drinks goode wine, the other never lacks.  
Thus a debate one nighte between them rose:  
Wineless his worship would no more repose  
Than he would die of all his friends bereft,  
Wheras his valet's eyelids could not close  
Whyle in the bowle a single drop was left.

## 28. SONG

WHAT evil woes dull Hate maye breede  
I wot not nor desire to wit,  
But well I wot the wounds doe bleede  
Since in my heart Love hath alit.  
Love should bear other name more fit  
That well were hight or flow'r or weede  
Soe swift his blooms be blowne to seede.

Soe fleet, or weede or flow'r insyde  
Her fickle heart wheron I dote;  
In myne where he doth ever byde  
O call him rock or starry mote!  
For I doe ever live devote  
To Love, and lovyng doe deryde  
Death that maye never vail his pryde.

## 29. SONG

HE who with a random eye  
Of sweet joye would have his fill,  
Let him on my Ladye spye  
Whom God keepe and guard from ill;  
For she hath soe faire a grace  
That a thousand grievous cares  
Fall from him that sees her face,  
More alsoe, if more he bears.

The great worth that is in her  
Is soe wonderful toe me,  
Always in my heart a-stir  
Moves her gracious memorye;  
The fine beautye of her face  
Makes me fear Death's dreadful whim,  
Yet most surely must her grace  
Win for me respyte of him.

## 30. BALLADE OF MAYE AND OF VIRTUE

FULL gladlye in this month of Maye  
The Earth bestirs her and renews;  
Each lover, his old fondness fey,  
Seeks otherwhere and hotly woos.  
Who in this wise his love pursues,  
His head is light as anye feather;  
Another waye my heart doth use:  
My love doth laste throughout alle weather.

Alle lovely cheekes doe wear awaye,  
And at the laste their beauty lose;

Tyme, grief, or sicknesse doe waylaye  
And take them in a tightened noose.  
But nothyng can or maim or bruise  
Her whose true heart is taut in tether;  
And for her beauty's fadeless hues,  
My love doth laste throughout alle weather.

And she whose beauty thus doth staye  
Is Virtue, childe of heavenly thews,  
And to her shynge height alwaye  
True lovers with sweete voice she woos.  
"Come, lovers, come!" ('Tis thus she sues),  
"O long-besought, come round me gather"  
(Such speech this happy mayde doth use),  
"My love doth laste throughout alle weather."

Prince, get thee love of lastynge hues  
And holde her faste in loyal tether,  
Soe mayst thou boast, withouten ruse,  
"My love doth laste throughout alle weather."

## CHRISTOPHE PLANTIN

(1514-1589)

### 31. HAPPINESSE

WHO hath a well-built house both clean and comelye,  
A garden with sweet flowers over-growne,  
Good fruit, good wine, a child, a wyfe that dumblye  
Yields all her dutye to her spouse alone;  
Who hath nor debt, nor strife, nor love growne fickle,  
Nor wealth to claim from those of kindred blood;

Who hath content that leaves the rich their mickle,  
And a behavioure that is righte and good;  
Who liveth simplye and without self-seekynge;  
Who gives his heart to godlye exercise;  
Who holds his servile passions from out-breakynge,  
Who keeps his spirit free, his judgement wise;  
Who counts his beads the whyle he tends his prunynge,  
Doth fynde lyfe gentlye untoe death attunynge.

## BOOK II



TO  
HILAIRE BELLOC

## PONTUS DE TYARD

(1521-1603)

32

SLEEPE, sire of rest and eke of dreams the sire,  
Nowe that the night's wide girth of darknesse dread  
O'er the still aire her mystie shroude hath spread,  
Come, fill myne eyes, O Sleepe whom I desire.  
For thy long absenee doth my spirit tire,  
And sharper feels its hardship endured;  
Come, Sleepe and drowse it. Like a dupe, misled  
Bye thy sweet falsehood, it maye seeme less dire.

Already Silence with her phantom horde  
Broods o'er the darknesse of blynde nighte abhorr'd;  
Me only, faithful, dost thou leave forlorn.  
Come, Sleepe desired, and my browes doe bynde,  
For I to thee an offerynge have sworn  
Of nighte-shade with thy poppy-head entwyn'd.

## PIERRE DE RONSARD

(1524-1585)

33

NOWE that the skiey space, the solid claye  
Feel icy fetters or hard-peltyng hail,  
And the stark horror of the frozen gale  
Stiffens the meadowe-grass to bristles graye;

Nowe that the wynde goes on his rebel waye,  
Down-hurlynge rocks, up-rootynge trees that wail;  
Nowe that the seas with swollen roar assail  
Beleaguered coasts with their soe wrathful spraye;

Though Winter freezes all, the flames me fill  
Of love that his harsh coldnesse cannot kill,  
With mighte more strong than the rude season's  
holde.

Beholde ye lovers, my soe strange mishap  
Who die of colde in Summer's kindlyng lap,  
And burne to death in the chill heart of colde.

## 34

I SEND to thee a posie gatheréd  
An hour agoe, its sweet buds open wide;  
Who had not pluckt them ere the evenynge died,  
Had found them fallen on the morrowe dead.  
Therin thou mayst beholde thy beauty fled,  
And a like end thy lovelinesse betide;  
However thou mayst bear it in thy pride,  
Like wither'd blossom it must soon be sped.

Tyme hasteth ever bye, O sweet ladye;  
Alas! not Tyme, but we alone speed on,  
And soone lie stark beneath the cold head-stone,  
With our dead loves as out of mynde as we.  
Then look upon me nowe full lovinglie,  
Ere in the grave thy lovelinesse be gone.

## 35

YOU spiky gorse, you hollye thorn-beset,  
One on the waste, the other in the wood;  
Ivye that clothes the walls of caverns rude,  
Sprynges that doe bubble from a sandy jet;  
Pigeons that savoury kysses give and get,  
Doves that doe wail their endlesse widowhood;  
You warblynge nightyngales that ever brood  
Or daye or night in amorous regret;

You red-throat swallowe, the mild season's guest,  
If you doe see my ladye in this Sprynge  
Amid the fresh green grass for flowers in quest,  
Tell her I wait alone her deare comýnge,  
And howe, so dire my need, without her blest,  
I would to death with greater thanksgivýnge.

## 36

ON my return to thee (Ah me! my woe),  
Thy kyss was frostye and as chill to taste  
As bloodless lips that Death hath sealed, and chaste  
As Dian on her brother mighte bestowe,  
Or girl on grandam; the betroth'd doth soe  
When by her chosen cavalier embrac'd,  
Without or warmth, or moisture, or fond haste.  
What! Is my lip then bitter as a sloe?

'Twere well thou hadst a lesson from the doves  
That beak to beak pledge tenderly their loves,  
Amid the branches in a long sweet bliss.  
Nay, I implore thee Sweetheart myne, alack!  
Kyss me with all thy heart within thy kyss;  
And, if not soe, then holde thy kysses back.

## 37

SINCE she is frostye as the Winter aire,  
Chillye as snowe that holds a heart of flint,  
Who loves me onely for her praise I print,  
Why not quit fondnesse and my fatal faire ?  
Her name and grandeur are a net to snare  
And hold me bounden to her service in't.  
Mistresse, my locks have not soe graye a tint  
But that another may finde pleasure there.

Love, like a wanton childe, 'hides not the truth :  
You have not such rare lovelinesse in sooth  
As makes it wise to turn true love awaye.  
My April dayes will nevermore come back ;  
Then love me for the youth that I doe lack,  
And I will love you when you too are graye.

## 38

WHEN thou art old and bye the fire alone  
Bent o'er the candle thou dost twirl the skeine, '  
Then shalt thou quaver, with bewilder'd brayne  
Howe Ronsard sang thy lovelinesse long gone.  
Then if thy servant hear my lover's moan  
Though toil doth drowse her, yet at that sweet strayne  
She shall arise to honour thy dead swaine,  
And give thy name immortal benison.

I shall be buried and long turned to claye  
Under dark myrtle-trees wherbye I rest ;  
Whyle thou besyde the hearth with shrunkn breast,  
Bewail'st the love that thou didst spurn awaye ;  
Then hearken nowe to thy true love's behest :  
Gather the roses of thy lyfe to-daye.

## 39. TO CASSANDRA

O MAYDE more tender yet  
Than shy sweet buds that wake  
On rose-trees dewy wet

When first the daye doth break,  
That from the thorny speare  
Half green, half red doe peere;

Faster than ivy clyngs

With supple stems entwyn'd  
Round the stout oak in ryngs  
A hundred-fold that bynd  
With their fond arms and slym  
The whole wide girth of hym,

Round me, O faire and fond,

Let thyne arms make a ryng;  
Link fast the gentle bond

Of thy sweet tetheryng;  
Let kysses givn and ta'en  
For evermore remayne.

Not tyme nor envious dread

Of other love more meet  
Shall fynd me sunderéd

From thy sweet lips, my sweet.  
Thus kysynge will we dwell  
Till lyfe bid us farewell.

The same moon, the same daye,

And the same hour we two  
Shall wander far awaye,

Death's pallid house to view,  
And those faire fields out-spread  
For lovers haply wed.

*Love's self amid the flow'rs*  
Of everlastynge sprynge  
Shall watch these loves of ours,  
Under the green boughs clynge;  
And we shall knowe the good  
Of gentle loverhood.

In fields of sedge and thyme,  
Along the level ground,  
With many a mazy chyme  
Accordant airs shall sounde;  
While, featly to these tunes  
A dancer swayes and swoones.

There heaven's unclouded space  
Shynes ever with clear light;  
No serpent thro' the maze  
Spits venom in its spite;  
For ever in those trees  
Birds synge their melodies;

Soft wyndes for ever goe  
With gentle sound a-styr,  
For ever laurels throwe  
Their coolynge shadowe there;  
There lovely flowers do swaye  
That never fade awaye.

Somewhere in the wyde space  
This happye garden covers  
We two shall fynde our place  
Amid the throngynge lovers,  
Unwearied as these  
In love's sweet ecstasies.

## 40

HERE is the wood wherof my angel sweete  
Thrilled all the boughs in April with her song;  
Here are the flowers that then felt her feete  
When lonely in sweet thought she went along;  
Here is the meadowe green wheron she stray'd  
That lusty grew at wafture of her hande,  
The soft enamel of the younglynge blade,  
Where she made gentle pillage of the lande;  
Here did she synge, and there her teares did flowe;  
Here did she smile, and there her eyes transfixt  
My soul soe deep that downe to death I goe;  
Here sat she; there her mazy footsteps mixt:  
On this frail loome thought-built, Love doth weave  
The shadowy raiment of the lyfe I live.

## 41

NOT sunrise that doth sette the rose a-fire,  
Nor lilies growynge where the streame is thin,  
Nor sounds of lute, nor birds' melodious din,  
Nor costly gemmes held fast in golden wire,  
Nor Zephyrs pantynge with soe warm desire,  
Nor surge that round the tall ship's prow doth spin,  
Nor dance of Nymphs above the babblynge lin,  
Nor all thynges blossomyng in Sprynge's attire,  
  
Nor armed camp with pointed lances spined,  
Nor shady caverns with smooth mosses lined,  
Nor forest boughes high-roofynge the greene maze,  
Nor solemn silence of dumb rocks forlorne,  
Give me such pleasure as a field unshorne  
Where without hope my hopefulness doth graze.



## 42

AS you maye see upon the stem in Maye  
The younglynge rose's lovely bud new-burst  
Make heaven jealous of its hue when first  
Dawn sprinkles dew upon the new-born daye:  
Grace and sweet love within its leaves alwaye  
Make gardens redolent, till it doth thirst  
Too ardent for the rayne, and soon immerst  
Dies, leaf by leaf, upon the witherynge spraye.

'Twas thus that thou, in thy first youthfulnessse,  
When earth and heaven did thy beauty blesse,  
Wast slayne by Fate and lower'd to thy tomb.  
Take thou my sighes and teares for offerynge,  
This bowle of milke, this basket full of sprynge,  
That, live or dead, thy body rose-like bloom.

## 43. ON HIS CHOICE OF A GRAVE

CAVES, and streames that downward slyde  
From the rockye mountain syde,  
That toward the ground belowe  
Fall and flowe;

And ye waves and forests greene  
By meanderynge meadows seene,  
And ye banks, and boughs that wave,  
Hark my stave!

When both Heav'n and Tyme decyde  
I no longer maye abyde,  
But must hence be borne awaye  
From the daye,

I forbid that men should break  
Costlye marble for my sake,  
Vainlye a faire stone to have  
For my grave.

But in marble's stead a tree  
I would have to shadowe me,  
Wherupon the boughs are seene  
Ever greene.

From my bodye maye there sprynge  
Ivye roots and stems that clynge,  
And about me be enwound  
Round and round.

Maye the tendrils of the vine  
Twist about this grave of myne,  
Sheddyng lightly everywhere  
Shadowes spare.

Maye the shepherds keep for aye  
Every yeare my festal daye;  
Maye both laddes and lambes be founde  
Nigh my mounde.

Then the offys dulye said  
And their tribute renderéd,  
Maye they hail my shade and saye  
In this waye:

“ What renowne is thyne, O fane  
Since within thy mound is lain  
Him whose verses everywhere  
Fill the aire!

“ Him who whyle he dwelt with us  
Never once grew envious  
Of the honours of the great  
Lords of state.

“ Naye, nor ever taught th’ abuse  
Of love’s potion, nor the use  
Of the art with magic blent  
Ancient;

“ But bye meadoweland and wood  
Showed the sacred Sisterhood  
Tramplynge thro’ the grasses tall  
To his call.

“ For he made from out his lyre  
Such accordant sounds suspire,  
Hallow’d with melodious words  
Fields and herds.

“ Maye sweet manna aye be shed  
Where he nowe lies buried,  
And the dewy balms that swaye  
Nights in Maye.

“ Round about him maye there sprynge  
Grass, and waters murmurynge,  
Ever green be one, and one  
Flowynge on.

“ We rememberynge his soe great  
Fame doe yearly dedicate  
Rites that else we doe assigne  
Pan divine.”

Thus shall shepherd laddes declare  
Pourynge manye cupfuls there  
O'er me in a mingled flood,  
Milk, and blood

Of their youngest lamb, whyle I  
In my new abode shall lie  
Where the ransomed spirits meet  
Joy complete.

Neither hail nor chillye snowe  
To those regions can win thro',  
There nðe thunder-bolts accurst  
Ever burst.

But for ever there doth last  
Undespoil'd of blight or blast  
Verdure; and for ever there  
Sprynge is faire.

## JOACHIM DU BELLAY

(1525-1560)

### 44

IF Lyfe's full span be but a daye that's sped  
From out eternity; if years spin bye,  
Drivyng our days before them hopeleslie;  
If all thynges born be thus soe swiftlye fled,  
Howe dost thou ponder, O soul emprisonéd?  
Why takst thou pleasure in soe dark a sky,  
Whenas thou art well-fledgéd and mayst fly  
To brighter dwellynge, with strong wing dispread?

There is that good wherunto all doe presse,  
 There is that ease wherfor all souls doe praye,  
 There love is and sweet pleasure evermore,  
 There, O my soul, in everlastyngnesse,  
 Beauty long-sought shall light thy lofty waye,  
 And thou have syghte of that thou dost adore.

## 45

STRANGER that seekest Rome in Rome, and nought  
 Of Rome in Rome mayst nowe perceive at all,  
 These palaces and arches long since wrought  
 And crumblynge walls are what men Rome nowe  
 call.

Beholde what pryde, what ruin! and howe she  
 Beneath whose yoke the whole wyde world did  
 bende

Was sometyme bound by her owne emperie  
 And slaine by Tyme that maketh all thynges ende.  
 Rome is Rome's only monument to fynde,  
 And Rome by Rome herself was over-throwne;  
 Tyber alone that to the sea doth wynde  
 Remains of Rome. O world inconstant growne!  
 That which is firm is by Tyme's hand undone,  
 And that is flittyng doth resistlesse runne.

## 46

NOT the wild wrath of flames that skyward shoot,  
 Nor ruthlesse cleavage of the conquerynge sword,  
 Nor madden'd soldiery a-thirst for loot,  
 That oft, O Rome, hath plunder'd thy rich hoard,  
 Nor blowe on blowe of fickle Fortune's axe,  
 Nor the slow rivyng of Tyme's thwarted steel,

Nor spite of men, nor jealous 'gods' attacks,  
 Nor traitorous mighte within the commonweal,  
 Nor the swift tumult of loud wynds that rave,  
 Nor the o'er-flowynge of old Tyber's tyde  
 That oftentimes hath drown'd thee in his wave,  
 Hath ought avail'd to lower thy great pryde  
 That with the relique of thy glorious days  
 Yet filleth all beholders with amaze.

## 47

THE Berecynthian in her chariot  
 Tower-crown'd, from whose womb many Gods  
had birth,—  
 Such was this ancient citey in her mirth,  
 And proud of the full brood that she begot.  
 This citey ev'n the Phrygian's womb could not  
 Out-vie in progeny; o'er all the earth  
 Her mighty swaye out-topped all other worth  
 And had noe likenesse save her owne proud lot.  
 Rome had but Rome for righte belikenyng,  
 Rome had but Rome alone to cause her dread;  
 And, bye the eternal synod order'd,  
 No human power had righte of challengynge  
 Her whose proud mighte did match the world's,  
whose head  
 Rose dauntlesse to the sky's environynge.

## 48

SLEEPE that most heavenlye of all boones is deemed,  
 Softer than honey sealed each weary lid,  
 When Love, full-laden with his pleasures, slid  
 Straight thro' the ivory gateway, and I dreamed.

As ivy twines a marble shaft, meseemed  
Her alabaster bosom soe I did,  
Like wanton willowes that the Loire bestrid,  
Claspyng the fertile bankes wherbye he streamed.

Love's cruel flame that smote my drowsy blood  
Set burnynge bye his swift-spied arrowe's kiss  
Made my soule trespass on her lips of rose,  
I on the brink of swift oblivion's flood,  
When wakefulnesse, growne jealous of my bliss,  
Did rouse sleep's warder and his doors uncloze.

## 49

WHEN I could taste (as nowe no more maye be)  
The honey sweete of thy soft syllables,  
Thou hid'st thy heavenly face, thyne eyes whose  
Doe holde me nowe in dire captivitie. [spells  
Nowe when soe sorrowful a fate I dree  
More deaf than a stunned shore loud ocean quells,  
Then art thou fain of my colde shape that dwells  
In outer solitude most shadowie.

What evil chance! Was stranger grief e'er tolde?  
Nowe maye I see, as bye a limner made,  
Her beauty wherof I am like to die;  
Nowe maye I touch the smooth hand and beholde  
The lovely eyes of her who mighte me aide,  
Yet have not hearynge of her lightest sighe.

50. A THRESHER OF WHEAT TO THE  
WYNDES

TO you light troupe that ryde  
On movynge wings and glyde  
Above the world and slake it,  
And with your murmur soft  
Move the green shade and oft  
With gentle tremors shake it—

For you I violets cull,  
And flowers beautiful,  
These roses and these lilies,—  
These roses all soe red  
And newly openéd,  
These pinks and daffodillies.

Nowe with your gentle breath  
Breathe on the plaine beneath,  
And lightly fan this meadowe,  
Whyle I doe sweat and straine  
At threshynge of my graine,  
And noon is without shadowe.

## 51

I HATE the Florentines' pelf-huntynge race,  
I hate the dull sense of the Siennese,  
I hate Venetians for their double face,  
I hate the falsehood of the Genoese,  
I hate (but wot not why) the Ferrarese,  
I hate the Lombards for their faithlesse grace,  
And Naples peacocks for their pompous pace,  
And coward Romans for their slothful ease.



I hate rebellious Englyshman, brave Scot,  
 Burgundian traitor, and French blabbyng tongue,  
 And Spanysh pryde, and Germans at the bung:  
 I hate some vice in every lande I wot.  
 I hate my sinful self, but still more strong  
 I hate a pedant more than all the lot.

## 52

HAPPIE is he that from a faire voyáge  
 Comes home as came the travell'd Ulysses  
 Or him that raped the fleece, wayworn, in ease  
 With his owne kindred to live out hys age.  
 When shall I see agayne myne owne villáge,  
 My hearth's blue smoke? O when agayne shall  
 So weary eyes behold the home that is [these  
 More deare to me than a Duke's heritage?

Dearer to me my father's roofs that lean  
 Than any Roman palace's proud gates;  
 Dearer to me than marble the thin slates;  
 Dearer to me my Loire than Tyber's sheen,  
 Dwarf Lyre's top than the Palatinate's,  
 Soft Anjou aire than anye sea-breeze keen.

## LOUISE LABÉ

(1526-1566)

## 53

WHILE that myne eyes with woeful teares doe flood  
 Lamentynge ever thy lost companie,  
 And while that, sighes and sobbynges sore withstood,  
 My voice maye still make falteryng melodie;

While that my tremblyng fingers yet maye thrill  
The light lute string to tell thy gracious wayes;  
While that my forlorn sprite hath all its will  
In knowynge nought save thee and thy sweete  
praise;—

That while I will not chide slow-comynge Death.  
But when myne eyes are waterlesse for woe,  
When my voice breaks, when my hande blunderéth,  
And my soule in this world hath noe more shewe  
Of fond obeisance to thy love's deare swaye,  
Then maye black Death make blynde my brightest  
daye.

## 54

SCARCE on my yieldynge pillowe doe I bend  
And fynde thereon my soe desired rest,  
Than my sad spirit from my heavyng breast  
Straightwaye to thee doth fly, beloved friend.  
A dream to me thy seemynge self doth send  
So long denied me, and my bosom blest  
Holdes all the happinesse of long request  
In sighes and teareful sobbynges without end.

O gentle sleepe, O solace of sweet Nighte,  
O pleasant rest, soe full of such deep peace,  
Take not awaye this dream that is my staye;  
And, if my poor soule never maye have sighte,  
Grant that my dream in slumber maye not cease  
To brynge the happinesse denied by daye.

## REMI BELLEAU

(1528-1577)

## 55. APRIL

APRIL, pryde of all the yeare  
When appeare

Leaves, and sap in fleecy bud  
Gently stirs with hope to yield  
Fruit fulfilled

From the younglynges of the wood;

April, pryde of meadowe-sheene  
Gold and greene,

She whose lavish whim doth shed  
Hues and flowers a thousand-fold  
On the moulde

In her glory garmented;

April, pryde of wyndes that sighe  
Lightly bye,

In whose fannyng her slim thread  
Under boughs a snare doth weave  
To bereave

Flora of her maidenhead;

April, thy soft hande alone  
Slips the zone

Laying Nature's bosom bare,  
Stored with odours and with flowers  
That in showers

Sweeten all the earth and aire;

April, pryde and pomp of Sprynge  
Flourishynge

On my Ladye's locks that meet  
O'er her browes and on her bosom  
Brimmed with blossom

Thousand-fold and full of sweet;

April, on thy smilynge face  
Love's own grace,

Lure and rapture of sweet breath;  
April, scent of Gods enshrined  
On the wynde

Sheddyng odour far beneath;

'Tis thy gentle summonynge  
That doth brynge

Back again the truant swallowes  
That in Winter fled afar,—  
They that are

Heralds to the Sprynge that followes.

Thorny briar and thorny boughes  
Blossom nowe;

Lilies, pinks, and roses red,  
That the sunny dayes do quicken  
Throng and thicken

In their lovely robes outspread;

And the nightyngale doth sweet  
Songs repeat;

In the shade he warbles long,  
Breaks the lilt and links agayne:  
The sweet chayne

Of his never-endynge song.

Love, when thou art haply come  
No more numb,  
Breathes agayne with gentle breath,  
And awakes the smoulderynge fire  
Of desire  
That chill Winter smotheréth.

In this weather fresh and sunny  
Bees mayke honey,  
Swarmynge all the sweets to sup;  
Each from flow'r to flower dallies  
Deep in chalice  
There to drink its odour up.

Maye perchance hath fresher wynde,  
Softer rind  
On her fruits, and dewes that bear  
Manna and the sweet that thryves  
In the hives  
Fostered by her gracious aire;

Yet my song I give to her  
That doth bear  
Her faire name that founde her home  
On the wavy sea that broke,  
And awoke  
Into lyfe amid the foam.

## ESTIENNE PASQUIER

(1529-1615)

56

THY sighte denied when deare to me,  
A month to me seemed June to June,  
And one sadde houre devoyde of boone  
Was as a daye, or even three.  
Nowe that no more thy selfe I see,  
Since I for thee no longer swoone,  
A single daye would seeme a moone,  
Wert thou besyde for companie.

And yet thy beauty stayes as brighte  
As when I found therin delighte,  
Who am noe more in Cupid's pow'r.  
'Tis sure that beauty doth not breede  
Love, but that love doth sowe the seede  
Of what we deem is beauty's flow'r.

## OLIVIER DE MAGNY

(1530-1559)

57

HAPPYE the man beyonde the city's hail  
Who lives on lande his fathers left him, where,  
His peaceful husbandry his only care,  
He hankers not for bliss beyond his pale.  
He never knowes nor foode nor raiment fail,  
But heedeth only that his tilth shall beare;  
And, if his householde hath not noble ware,  
Nor hath it burden of misfortune's bale.

Nowe doth he graft a tree, nowe doth he twine  
 Round stout elm-branches the unstable vine,  
     Nowe breaks a dam to water his parched lawne;  
 Then home at evenyng with his smalle clan  
 He sups bye candle-lighte, a happye man  
     Amid good cheere, and slumbers deepe till dawne.

## ESTIENNE JODELLE

(1532-1573)

58

AS one astraye within the forest deepe,  
     Far from the road, nor path nor grange in sighte;  
     As one that on the sea doth dread the mighte  
 Of vast, wynd-vexéd waves that downward sweepe;  
 As one that wanders on the fields that sleepe,  
     Without a starre, soe I in such sore plighte  
     Have beene astraye without or path or lighte,  
 Like barque o'erwhelméd or bewilder'd sheepe.

But when I see, as they, my nighte o'er-worne,  
     By forest, field or wave, the fold, the quay,  
 The boone seems greater than the evil borne.  
 Soe I who, lackynge thee, was thus forlorne,  
     Forget at sighte of thy faire radiancie,  
 Forest and ocean, darke and tempest-torne.

## JEAN-ANTOINE DE BAÏF

(1532-1589)

## 59. SPRING SONG

IDLE Winter's colde  
Nowe at last is spent;  
Blithesome Sprynge beholde  
Full of ravishment.

Earth is fledged with greene  
Full of buds aswaye;  
Leafage maykes a screene  
In the woodlande waye.

Lighte of foot, the girl,  
She no slug-a-bed,  
Ere the rose unfurl,  
Plucks its drowsy head;

Soe she comelier seeme  
With the bud on breast,  
Or the rose she deem  
For her lover best,

In his hande toe tayke  
As a pledge of troth,  
And with kysynge slake  
Love that's never loth.

Listen from the pale,  
Shepherd's pipe that shrill  
Makes the nightyngale  
Sweeter sorrowe spill.



See the waves that flowe  
Crispéd in the brooks,  
Trees with greene aglowe  
In their glassy looks.

Nowe the sea is soft,  
Stay'd and smooth the wind  
Makes the sailes to waft  
Vessels untoe Ind.

Nowe have all birdes sweet  
Song with voices suave,  
Larks above the wheat  
Swannes upon the wave;

Swallowes round the roof,  
Nightyngales that nest  
In the woods aloof,  
Synge nor ever rest.

Sorrowe and content  
Of my love I'll synge,  
An his flame be spent  
Or still wantonynge.

Why then should I quell  
Songs that over-brim  
When all thynges up-well  
With the season's whim ?

## GUY DE TOURS

(   ?   )

60

I HAVE noe eyes save when on her I looke,  
Nor noe desire save that she doth beget,  
Nor anye sighs save when by her forsooke,  
Nor anye thought save it be on her set.  
Soe deeply is she printed on my braine,  
There is nought else of worth untoe my minde;  
All speech of other ladies seemeth vaine,  
As that to me another should be kinde;  
I have noe feet save unto her I wend,  
I have noe hands save when her owne I feel;  
I have noe heart save with her owne to blend,  
Nor ought at all save what from her I steal,  
Who am not myself, soe much from her I borrowe  
Whose long unkindnesse worketh my great sorrowe.

## JEAN DOUBLET

(   ?   )

61

MESEEMETH that soe manye shafts be notte  
In the full quiver of all England's front,  
As Love the archer over me hath shotte  
Unwearied in his hunt.

Sheltered amid the sacred maidens nine  
Whom he is said to fear, still doth he come;  
Beneath the waters of their spring divine  
His arrowes still strike home.

I goe my waye, but am by him out-spced;  
I fly, but never does the hunt growe slack.  
Still in my heart his cruel shaft growes red,  
Altho' I turn my back.

## JEAN PASSERAT

(1534-1602)

### 62. ODE FOR THE FYRST OF MAYE

QUIT thy bed and sleepe of twilight  
On this tyde,  
Nowe for us the dawn's red skylight  
Opens wyde;  
Heaven hath a smilynge face -  
Ever in this moone of grace;  
Sweete, draw nigh!  
Let us kindle love and kiss,  
In this world he lives a-miss  
That letteth love goe bye.

Come with me and leave the rabble;  
Under trees  
Let us hark the shy birdes babble  
Melodies;  
Let us listen to the stave  
That the nightyngale soe suave  
Doth prolong;  
Ev'n as he doth with his voice  
Banish sorrowe and rejoyce;  
Brief must be our song.

Tyme that wills not we should marry  
    And be blithe,  
In his flight our youth doth harry  
    With his scythe.  
Graye of hair, upon a daye  
In thy sorrowe thou shalt saye  
    " Foolish girl!  
Howe hast thou with sad unthrift  
Squandered all thy beauty's gift  
    On old Tyme the churl! "

Leave we then our teares, and gather  
    Ere it fade,  
The sweet flower of youth together,  
    Man and mayde;  
Heaven hath a smilynge face  
Ever in this moone of grace;  
    Sweete, draw nigh!  
Let us kindle love and kiss.  
In this world he lives a-miss  
    That letteth love goe bye.

## 63. VILLANELLE

I HAVE lost my turtle fleet:  
    Is that her owne voice blowne bye ?  
After her I fayne would beat.

Dost thou sorrowe for thy sweet ?  
    Soe, alack-a-daye, do I!  
I have lost my turtle fleet.

If thy love hath constant heat,  
    Soe my faith burns steadily:  
After her I fayne would beat.

Doth thy mournful playnte repeat ?  
 Even soe I heave my sighe:  
 I have lost my turtle fleet.

Since noe more my love I meet,  
 Nothyng lovely I espy:  
 After her I fayne would beat.

Death whom daily I entreat,  
 Take thyne owne and let me die:  
 I have lost my turtle fleet,  
 After her I fayne would beat.

#### 64. ON THE DEATH OF THULÈNE THE KYNGE'S JESTER

SIRE, Thulène is dead. I have seen his grave;  
 Yet mighte you raise him from his coffin narrowe;  
 Give to the poet what to the fool you gave:  
 Poet and fool are born of the same marrowe.  
 One flys ambition and the other flouts;  
 Both get poor worth for what is in their purses;  
 Their easye humour quicklie smyles or pouts;  
 One's speech is heedlesse as the other's verses.  
 One hath a green head, and the other goes  
 Clad in a prettye cap of greene and yellowe;  
 One synges you sonnets whyle the other's toes  
 Move to the sound of his owne bells, poor fellowe.  
 In this unlike: Fortune to fools makes offers,  
 But unto poets brynges but emptye coffers.

## VAUQUELIN DE LA FRESNAYE

(1535-1607)

## 65. SONG

LOVE be mute, but take thyne arc,  
 For my wild and lovelye deer,  
 In the dawn or in the dark  
 Passeth near.

Here be foot-prints. Lo! her shape.  
 To her heart thyne arrowe speed.  
 Miss her not lest her escape  
 Mock thy deed.

Woe is me! 'Tis blynde thou art!  
 O the cruel drops that draine!  
 Far she flies nor feels thy dart:  
 I am slaine.

## 66

O PLEASANT wynde whose balmye breath doth fill  
 The aire with perfume that these flowers doe freight!  
 O happye field wheron the teares did spill  
 Of gentle lovers when unfortunate!  
 O shadye woode, O runnyng river swifte  
 That out of wretchednesse saw joye aryse,  
 Pure bliss ensuinge on their long unthrift,  
 And each in other's perfect love growne wyse.  
 Nowe age hath purged them of all carnal neede;  
 And, moved bye holye thoughts to thrust behynde



## PHILIPPE DESPORTES

(1546-1606)

## 68. VILLANELLE

*ROSETTE*, because I stayed away  
A little whyle, you wanton grew,  
And I who knew how you did swaye,  
Theron was fayne noe more of you.  
Noe more such fickle lovelinesse  
Shall holde me captive in its net:  
We soone shall see, light shepherdesse,  
Which shall be first to know regret.

Whyle in vaine teares my lyfe I lose  
And doe bemoan my lonely fate,  
You who doe love by simple use,  
Have fond arms for another mate;  
Noe weather-vane more swiftly veers  
Before the wind than you, Rosette:  
We soone shall see whose love outwears—  
Which shall be first to knowe regret.

Where are your holye promises,  
And where are nowe your farewell woes?  
And could such sorrowe-laden cries  
Come from a heart that gaddyng goes?  
Pardie! but you're a lyinge lasse,  
And curst the man whose trust you get!  
We soone shall see, light shepherdesse,  
Which shall be first to knowe regret.

He who doth tayke the sweets were myne  
Lacks wit to woe as well as I,



And<sup>l</sup> she I love is far more fine  
 In beauty, love and loyaltie.  
 Holde closely then your new-found swaine;  
 This love of myne is firmly set,  
 And then we soone shall see, of twaine,  
 Which shall be first to knowe regret.

## 69. OF A FOUNTAYNE

CHILL is the fount whose gentle streame doth carrye  
 Tidynges of love as silverly it flowes  
 Thorough green stalkes that on the brink doe tarrye  
 Beneath the shadowe that the alder throwes.  
 Lithe boughs in the low wynde with soft complainynge  
 Make love-lorn sighes within that cool retreat;  
 Whyle the hot sun, his topmost height attainynge  
 Doth crack the earth with his soe ardent heat.  
 Pilgrym that on the hard high road hath wended,  
 Sorely athirst beneath the beames that blaze,  
 Here let thy wearinesse awchyle be ended;  
 Here take thyn ease awchyle from dustye wayes;  
 In the cool aire and shade thy heat forsakyng  
 Where the chill fountayne for thy thirst hath slakyng.

## 70. ON THE DEATH OF DIANA

AS you maye see the sudden lightnyng smite  
 A cloudy pathwaye and wane out on it,  
 This blessed soul, unmarked of mortal wit,  
 Hath left her young heart's dwellynge for the lighte.  
 My thought hath follow'd, in default of sighte  
 Up to heaven's arches with her presence lit,  
 And seen howe in the glowe where she doth sit  
 She grieveth for me here in the world's nighte

O Goddess, wait no more! the time is come,  
Now that thy dust is coffin'd and thy tomb  
Doth wear the tribute woven of my love;  
For, havynge honoured thee with this sad rite,  
Weary of teares and misery infinite,  
I leave the earth and fly to thee above.

## CATHERINE DES ROCHES

(1550-1587)

## 71. QUATRAIN ON ACHILLES

ACHILLES chose a meaner task when he  
Threw downe the distaff and took up the sworde:  
One weaves the raiment of humanitye,  
The other slits the corde.

## THEODORE-AGRIPPA D'AUBIGNÉ

(1551-1630)

## 72. SONNET TO THE KYNGE

SIRE, your dogge Lemon, once your bed-fellowe,  
Nowe hath the bare ground for his nightly stead;  
That same true dogge that, by his instinct led,  
Leal friends from traitors did soe rightly knowe.  
His voice it was that frightened robbers soe,  
His teeth gript murderers; discomforted,  
Why hath he harde blowes and a beggar's bed,  
The wonted wage that royal kynges bestowe?

His pryde, his beauty, and his winsome youth  
Made you to love him; but he had noe ruth

For your ill-wishers whose bold steps he barr'd.  
Ye courtiers proude beholdynge haughtilie  
This outcast dogge that in the streets doth die,  
On your devotion waits a like rewarde.

## **BOOK III**

TO KATHERINE T.

Puck's whim once made an ass of man,  
As swine he grunted, changed by Circe;  
And even so translators can  
Misrender poets without mercy.

I have not Orpheus' skill, but try  
To mimic in my tongue French singers,  
And guard lest I should pull awry  
Their harp-strings with un-nimble fingers.

Here take what I have done, dear friend,  
My fairer Circe, void of malice;  
And proffer me the sweets that blend  
For my translation in your chalice.

And may you find my faults are few,  
And my toil-gotten rhymes well-mated  
This book I dedicate to you  
Who, in a day, my life translated

## FRANÇOIS DE MALHERBE

(1555-1628)

### 73. CONSOLATION TO M. DU PÉRIER

AND must thy grief, Du Périer, knowe no end ?  
And the sad counselling  
Brought to thee fatherlike by thyne old friend  
But make more sharp its sting ?

The sorrowe of thy daughter borne awaye  
By Death that comes to all,  
Is it a maze wherein thy mind doth straye,  
There lost beyond recall ?

I knowe what winning wayes, deare child, were hers,  
Nor ever would I stem  
In churlish wise, the falling of thy teares  
By misbeholding them.

But of this world she was where things most glad  
Have ever hardest doom ;  
And as a rose she lived a daye who had  
A rose's lovely bloom.

And had she lived as thou didst pray she mighte,  
Laden with yeares to wane  
At last with all her gold hair turned to white,  
What then had been her gaine ?

Deemst thou that Paradise, an she were old,  
For her had shone more faire,  
Or lighter laine on her the chillye mould  
Or worms that burrowe there ?

No, no, deare friend! for Fate drives instantlye  
The soul from out its ark:  
Age, in that setting forth leaves not the quay  
To followe the dim barque.

Fate's most unfeeling fingers ply the sheares.  
Vainly on her we call;  
Sternly to all our cries she stops her eares,  
And will not heed at all.

The frugal hind that under thatch doth dwell  
Obeys her summoning;  
And at the Palace gate the sentinel  
Saves not our Lord the Kynge.

All murmurs 'gainst her, all despair or wrath  
Will bring us no release;  
To yield unto God's will is the one path  
Can lead us unto peace.

#### 74. ON THE DEATH OF HIS SON

FOR that my son hath lost his mortal shrine,  
This deare, brave lad on whom I did so dote,  
I do not saye that destiny mis-wrote,  
Since at the last must every life decline.  
But that two crafty rascals bye design  
Cut short his dayes with their fell blades that smote,—  
Therein my grief noe solace finds to quote,  
And all my soule doth in my grief repine.

O God, my Saviour, since of simple neede  
 My soule's deep wound for evermore must bleede,  
 The vowe of vengeance is a righteous vowe.  
 With thy strong arms upholde and strengthen me;  
 Deal thou thy justice for their felon blowe,  
 Sons of the ruffians who did murder Thee.

## MADemoiselle DE Gournay

(1566-1645)

### 75. QUATRAIN ON A PICTURE OF JOAN OF ARC

"HOW canst thou reconcile, O heavenly mayde,  
 Thy melting glances and thyne eager blade? "  
 "My soft eyes on my darling country beam;  
 My sword doth smite her freedom to redeem."

## MATHURIN RÉGNIER

(1573-1613)

### 76. STANZAS

SINCE thyne eye so ardently ashine with love's own  
splendour  
 First within my loyal heart hath kindled all of tender,  
 Since, as tho' a saintly star, I worship at thy feet,  
 Come, why not love me, Sweet?

Since thy loveliness that erstwhile renders thee  
unyielding  
 Must, like any wither'd flower under grass for shield-  
ing,



Shrink from savage tempests storming after  
 summer's heat,  
 Come, why not love me, Sweet ?

Wilt thou let thine eye begetting all of love's warm  
 pleasure  
 Be to thy sweet self no other than a useless treasure ?  
 Since Love like a god in every living heart doth beat,  
 Come, why not love me, Sweet ?

Dost thou wait a distant morrowe for thy deare  
 regretting ?  
 Thus thou wilt with fortune's hazard tease my lorn  
 heart's frettynge.  
 Since in a so mellowe season our two lives do meet,  
 Come, why not love me, Sweet ?

If thy beauty be so great that there be none com-  
 paring,  
 Heaven not created it for my poor heart's despair-  
 ing,  
 Since meseems it hath compassion when we do  
 entreat,  
 Come, why not love me, Sweet ?

### 77. A CONFESSION IN BRIEF

SINCE sev'n sins from these our eyes  
 Bar the gates of Paradyse,  
 Holy father, if truth's in me,  
 I'll abhor them everywhere,  
 An thou wilt but to me spare  
 Haste and lust that so do win me.

These in me are Nature's flaw,  
These nor precept, nay, nor law  
Nor your nimble speech can alter;  
And when simple sorrowe might  
Save me from my sinful plight,  
Whim would make my lips to falter.

I have tried to foil them oft  
With a *Pater Noster* soft,  
With a Bible text to smother;  
In the midst of combats fell,  
Voices soothe mine ire and tell  
Howe kind Nature is their mother.

'Tis not God hath giv'n me these  
To augment mine enemies,  
But a new Pandora sowing  
With her own hand far and wide,  
As a bane for human pride,  
This strange falsehood in me growing.

For no saint, howe'er devout,  
Firm and zealous could put out  
Such a blaze of sinful fuel;  
Carmelite, Celestine pure  
Never could 'gainst such a lure,  
Keep unbroke a law so cruel.

Do thou then as I have claimed,  
Soe that, firm and unashamed,  
I've a conscience clean within me,  
As of old the Saints were knowne:  
From the sev'n sins take alone  
Haste and lust that so do win me.

## 78. HIS OWN EPITAPH

I LIVED a life was fancy free,  
Slowe-drifting on contentedly  
Adowne the road my feet did find;  
And wherefore Death should think of me  
I cannot guess, since steadily  
I alwayes kept him out of mind.

## FRANÇOIS MAYNARD

(1582-1642)

79

HOWE faire a destiny 'twould be  
If after death love still might thrive  
And followe to the grave with me,  
For then with death I would not strive.  
But Death, I fear, when he dismembers,  
Will leave no flame in Love's dead embers.

Nowe only death I do desire  
Since that thy so unstable mind  
For me hath quenched its fickle fire.  
The daye I hate and all mankind;  
And, if in life I still am sighing,  
'Tis but to save my love from dying.

## 80. EPITAPH

HERE lies a toper drank more wine  
Than any other man was able;

He had no faith in Gods divine  
Save him that haunts a tavern table.

He dropt into yon river's slime—  
A clumsy boatman caused the ripple.  
This was the first and only time  
He took plain water with his tippie.

## THÉOPHILE DE VIAU

(T590-1626)

## 81. THE BOATMEN

DARLING little winged boys are clinging to our skulls,  
Tritons in their envy full of fondness swarming near;  
Now the wind grows gentle and the surging billow lulls,  
Lapsing on a stilly tide wherever we may steer.

The wheeling stars smile down from heaven to help  
us as we go,  
No storm can daunt our sailor-lads, nor make their  
cheeks turn pale,  
And never doth the bird of calm nest smooth amid  
the flow  
Without a glance as he goes by to bless the flapping  
sail.

Our Ocean is as gentle as the flood Euphrates bears;  
Not Pactolus nor Tagus with so rich a wave can  
  bless;

Here never pilot dreads to meet with crafty buccaneers,  
Nor knows such long unbroken calm as leads to  
weariness.

Here underneath a gentle sky, and far from thunder's  
roar,  
The leisurely slow watches bring us nought but  
smoothest ease,  
And here our eyes no yearning know to greet again  
the shore,  
But pity the poor angel throng that sail not on  
such seas.

O you for whom love sighs and sighs, dear beauties  
still unwed,  
Come share with us the happiness that rides  
where'er we go;  
And we will swear to all the world that never sails  
were spread  
Above a ship with such a prize betwixt her stern  
and bow.

## MARC-ANTOINE DE SAINT-AMANT

(1594-1661)

### 82. THE RISING SUN

GODDESS of the rosy hue  
Holy unto Eastern eyes,  
Rose of dawn that doth renew  
Ere thy sire the Sun doth rise,  
Bring the daylight unto me  
So that I my love may see.

Sure the night is overworn;  
Shrill the cocks salute the sun;  
Mount the golden car of morn  
Drawn by hours that swiftly run,  
Haste and come that all may scan  
How thou paintest heaven's span.

Gentle beam of my desire  
I behold thee. Welcome here!  
Heavenly thy beauty's fire  
On the cloud doth now appear,  
And thy star with pallid light  
Makes the Eastern mountains bright.

## DENIS SANGUIN DE SAINT-PAVIN

(1595-1670)

## 83. EPIGRAM

TIRCIS makes rhymes as fast as ticking;  
Mine with good cause find slower birth:  
For his v ill die while still he's kicking,  
But mine will live when I'm in earth.

## VINCENT VOITURE

(1598-1648)

## 84. RONDEAU

IN good plain French your words devoutly rise  
More solemn than a monkey could devise;  
Your soul aye finds so little that doth please,  
We well might think our France and all her sees  
Turned round your reverend worship pivot-wise.

For every matter you have bigot sighs,  
For all our wickedness teares fill your eyes;  
You hide your Spanish heart in homilies  
Of good plain French.

Then leave our State untroubled of your cries;  
A worthy sailor-man the rudder plies:  
For, if we must speak frankly at our ease,  
Although your mind is full of subtleties,  
That you're a blockhead we all realize  
In good plain French.

## PIERRE CORNEILLE

(1606-1684)

## 85. STANZAS TO THE MARQUISE

MARQUISE, if on my face you spy  
Some trace of Time's unsparing graver,  
Remember when as old as I  
You'll hardly showe a fairer favour.

For Time doth take in ruthless holde  
The loveliest things that we do cherish;  
As he hath lined my forehead old,  
So he will make your roses perish.

The same swift planets in their course  
Draw on our dayes and nights unceasing;  
My face was once as fair as yours,  
And yours must soon like mine be creasing.

Yet have I dazzling charms to fright  
The stern aspect of Time's deploying,  
And give me courage to despise  
The onward march of his destroying.

Your charms by all are worshippéd;  
But those that you esteem so lightly  
May well endure when yours are dead,  
And all your beauty growne unsightly.

They may bestowe undying fame  
On eyes that unto me are dearest,  
And in a thousand yeares proclaim  
The beauty that for me thou wearest.

And that new race beyond the grave  
To what I write shall render credit,  
And you shall have no beauty save  
As I alone have sung or said it.

Then ponder well, my fair Marquise:  
Though silvery hairs do so affright you,  
Yet such as I 'twere well to please  
Whose printed word may bless or blight you.



## PAUL SCARRON

(1610-1660)

## 86. HIS OWN EPITAPH

HE who underground doth slumber  
Few men envied, many pitied,  
Suffered deaths withouten number  
Ere at last this life he quitted.  
Friend, let not your footsteps jar on  
This his grave lest you awake him;  
For 'tis the first night poor Scarron  
Felt sound slumber overtake him.

## ISAAC DE BENSERADE

(1612-1691)

## 87. FOR MADAME

WHEN you beholde her graciousness and glory,  
The beauty of her features, the splendour of her  
birth,  
Like to the goddesses of early Grecian story  
Would you not take her for Juno come to earth ?

When you behold how all are fain to serve her,  
When in her company how all men have adored,  
Her eyes that are shining with all grace and loving  
fervour,  
Would you not take her for Venus' self restored ?



"How fared you in your Summer dayes?"  
Said she to her needy friend.

"Unto all, sun high or setting,  
I did sing, save your displeasure."—

"Did you then? I'm g'ad you'd leisure!  
Well, now start your pirouetting."

### 89. THE RAT WHO WITHDREW FROM THE WORLD

AMONG Levantine legends you maye find  
One of a rat worn out with worldly strife  
Who in the hollow of a round Dutch rind  
Withdrew to lead a cloistral life.

The solitude was audible

Round the deep arches of his cell.

The hermit made his living in the husk.

Soe well he wrought with toe and tusk,

That soon within his cell's dark core

Was ample victualling. What would you more?

The rat grew sleek. (The Lord doth bless alwayes  
Whom to his saintly service vow their dayes.)

One daye a godly caller bore,

As leading counsellor among the rats,

For some small alms his government's behest:

They had decided on a foreign quest

To seek for help against the horde of cats

Ratopolis did whelm;

With empty pockets they had left,

Since of all money was bereft

The cat-beleaguered realm.

They asked small tribute, counting that such aid  
Would be forthcoming ere five suns should fade.

"My friends," replied the lonely man,

"I meddle not in sub-celestial feud:

What can a poor soul in its solitude  
To help you forward in your plan  
But pray to heaven for the help you need ?  
And may the Lord thereunto give full heed.”  
And, having answered thus, full piously  
The new saint shut his door (and turned the key).

\* \* \* \* \*

Whom do you think that I so, with craft,  
Show as a niggardly rat for parity ?  
A monk ? Why no, but a dervish daft :  
For I take it a monk is all loving charity.

#### 90. THE DONKEY LOADED WITH RELICS

SOME relics on a donkey being tied,  
The beast imagined as he proudly strode,  
Men bowed unto himself and not his load,  
And thought their “Aves” to himself applied.  
Some one who saw his error said aloud  
“Dull donkey, do not let your mind grow proud  
With such an idle whim.  
Incense and hymn  
Are for the holy relics that you carry,  
And these alone deserve such adoration.”

Men bow not to an ignorant functionary,  
But only to his circumstance and station.

#### 91. THE OAK AND THE REED

“YOU have good cause to weep your fate,”  
Unto the slender reed the oak once said :  
“A wren for you must seem a dreadful weight ;  
The least wind that doth spread

A ripple on the stream in spate,  
    Makes your poor head grow pliant.  
Whereas my brow like to a lofty hill  
Not only takes the sunbeams as they spill,  
    But to the storm's defiant.  
Winds that to you are blasts, to me are sighs.  
    Still, did you spring where my boughs make a shield  
    Of leaves above the field  
You need not know such agonies:  
    I would defend you when the thunder pealed.  
But often on the humid brink you grow  
Of realms where the winds blow.  
    Nature to you indeed seems very harsh."  
    "Your pity," said the poor reed of the marsh,  
"Is kindly meant. But don't be too soft-hearted.  
    To you the winds bear a more dreadful spite:  
I bend, but break not. So far you have thwarted  
    The awful blows wherewith they smite  
    Your stout trunk still unbending. . . .  
    But bide your time." Scarce had he made an ending  
When from the horizon wildly blown  
    The most fell blast did speed  
    That ever yet the icy Pole did breed.  
The tree stood steadfast, while the reed bent down.  
    With double effort then  
    The wind his roots up-tore  
    Whose lofty head unto the clouds did soar  
    Whose feet were buried in the dust of men.

## 92. THE ASS CLOTHED IN THE LION'S SKIN

FEAR fled before a wily Ass that clad  
    In lion's skin his head and shoulders;  
Though little might the creature had,  
    He frightened all beholders.

An ear-tip showing to observant eyes  
 Made plain the sham of his disguise;  
 And straightway Martin set him running.  
 But those still blinded by his cunning  
 Were much amazed his lash should dare  
 Drive back the lion to his lair.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

How many folks who make a stir in France  
 Remind us daily of the fabled Ass:  
 Vain pomp, alas!  
 The only witness of their valiance.

## JEAN-BAPTISTE POQUELIN DE MOLIERE

(1622-1673)

### 93. TO M. LE VAYER ON THE DEATH OF HIS SON

WEEP on Le Vayer, make thine eyes an urn,  
 Thou hast good reason for thine éxtreme woe,  
 Wisdom herself would let her tears o'er-flowe  
 If her own loss were such as thou dost mourn.  
 Vainly with idle precept the forlorn  
 Strive to behold dry-eyed their loved ones goe;  
 All Nature deems it but a heartless showe,  
 And eyes such crude barbarity with scorn.

Too well we knowe no weeping can make whole  
 The dear son whom too sudden Death did reap.  
 Not therefore doth the blowe less sharply smite:  
 All men revered him for his virtuous soul,  
 Large-hearted, lofty-minded, full of light,  
 And for these things we must for ever weep.

## PHILIPPE QUINAULT

(1635-1688)

## 94. THE SONG OF PLUTO

ALL men this path must tread;  
Life doth but lead  
    To Death's reprieve.  
Thereby a hundred woes are thrown aside;  
Who still would bide  
    But seeks the more to grieve.

Draw near the darkness of this nether shore;  
    The rest ye so do crave  
    Is not for mortals save  
Unto Death's harbour ye be ferried o'er.  
    All souls at last have place within this gloom;  
    All hither come  
And hence pass out no more.

This is the law that bindeth all alive;  
The might wherewith ye strive  
    Makes but a vain effort.  
    Say, wise is he  
    That shuns the peril of this sea?  
It is a storm to drive  
    The ship unto her port.

## JEAN RACINE

(1639-1699)

95. HYMN TRANSLATED FROM THE ROMAN  
BREVARY

GREAT God at whose divine word of command  
The heavens did arise,  
Thou settest borders to the seas, and spann'd  
With thine unmeasured skies.

Ev'n as the heavenly arch hath liquid plains,  
The earth hath streams that run  
And to the arid meadows bear their rains  
In time of parching sun.

Lord, like the waters let thy grace down fall  
To heal us in thy tide,  
That from this day our sense be no more thrall  
To snares the world doth hide.

And of thy faith send the propitious beams  
Upon our eyes to burst,  
And tear the mask from the infernal schemes  
Of wickedness accurst.

Eternal Father, Son, all wisdom's source,  
And Spirit, God of peace,  
That dost control of Time th' inconstant course,  
Reign on and never cease.



GUILLAUME AMFRYE, ABBÉ DE  
CHAULIEU

(1639-1720)

96. TO THE SOLITUDE OF FONTENAY

'MID these hamlets and these woods  
Life itself at last I find;  
Here my soul no longer broods  
On my sorrows left behind.

Fontenay delightful where  
My young eyes first saw the sun,  
Soon unto my sires I'll fare  
When the race of life is run.

Muses who beside this lawn  
Nourished me with kindly breath,  
Trees that saw my young life dawn  
You shall see it wane in death.

Yet 'tis wise to breathe the air  
In the shadow of your boughs  
Tearless, and my soul prepare  
For that dark and awful house,

Where of all the trees that I  
Set within the grove to wave  
There shall follow when I die  
Cypress only to my grave.

## CHARLES RIVIÈRE DU FRESNY

(1648-1724)

## 97. THE NEXT DAYS

FAIR Phyllis, more niggard than coy,  
On getting no gain by denying,  
For twenty fine sheep of her boy  
Once offered a kiss for his buying.

The next day to bargain once more:  
The shepherd found things in his favour,  
Demanding of kisses a score  
For every sheep that he gave her.

The next day fair Phyllis was fain,  
And fearing her shepherd's displeasure,  
In haste gave his flock back again  
For a kiss that he paid her at leisure.

The next day her passion so drave,  
Dog and sheep she'd have given unto him,  
For a kiss that for nothing he gave  
To Lizette who had started to woe him.

## JEAN-BAPTISTE ROUSSEAU

(1670-1741)

## 98. LOVE

LOVE comes not by trying,  
Love's a jealous God;  
On himself relying,  
Men must wait his nod.  
All own his prerogative;  
He alone doth lawless live.

In the frozen fallows  
Flora's throne doth rise;  
Wind drives home the swallows,  
And the wind's self dies:  
Love alone when he takes wing  
Turns not home from wandering.

## FRANÇOIS-MARIE AROUET DE VOLTAIRE

(1694-1778)

## 99. TO MADAME LULLIN

AND doth my agéd Muse forlorn  
Surprise you that she still is able,  
Though eighty winters she hath borne,  
To quaver lines of ode or fable ?

Sometimes a plot of green will spring  
In wintry fields the frost makes hoary,

Spared but a while as comforting  
The summer season's faded glory.

A bird may warble an he will,  
With all his brave days left behind him,  
But in his song shall sound no thrill  
Of tender love that once did bind him.

'Tis thus I touch the worn-out strings  
That foil these fingers once untiring,  
'Tis thus I try this voice that sings  
E'en though the singer be expiring.

"I would in death's farewell, my Queen,"  
(Tibullus to his mistress sighing),  
"Fix mine eyes on thine own, and e'en  
Would clasp thee with the hand that's dying."

But when we feel life ebb apace,  
The soul borne on beyond retrieving,  
Then have we eyes for Delia's face,  
Or hands to fondle her we're leaving?

Man must forget in such a plight  
The deeds that in his haleness please him;  
And when was ever mortal wight  
Content to feel Death's fingers seize him?

And even Delia, when in turn  
She lies with endless night around her,  
Forgets the beauty made men yearn,  
And love that all through life enwound her.

Birth, life, and death are ours, sweetheart,  
And none doth know how he came hither.  
Each out of nothingness doth start;  
Where doth he go? . . . God knoweth whither.

## 100. TO M. GRETRY

YOUR songs Paris honoured of late,  
 The Court has rewarded with jeers.  
 Alas! that the ears of the great  
 Are so often such very great ears.

## 101. FOR A STATUE OF LOVE

WHOE'ER you are, you here your master see:  
 He is, or was, or very soon shall be.

## 102. ON JEAN FRERON

THE other day while in the dale our friend did fare on  
 A hidden serpent chanced to sting poor Johnny  
Fréron.  
 And then what think you followed on this evil spiting?  
 The serpent burst in agony and died of biting!

## PONCE-DENIS ECOUCHARD LEBRUN

(1729-1807)

103. DIALOGUE BETWEEN A POOR POET AND  
THE AUTHOR

I HAVE just been robbed of papers!—I am sorry for  
your grief.  
 Yes, of all my hand-writ verses!—O! I'm sorry for  
the thief.

## JEAN-FRANÇOIS DUCIS

(1733-1816)

## 104. TO MY BROOK

BROOK little known whose waters run  
Along a wild and hidden bed,  
Like thee the busy world I shun  
And love the wilderness instead.

Brook in forgetfulness now drown  
The sorrows of my past forlorn,  
And leave within my soul alone  
The peace that on thy tide is borne.

Thy banks are dear to lilies pale  
And to the lowly marguerite;  
And by thy stream the nightingale  
Doth warble out his passion sweet.

And nigh thee from the soul in peace  
Doth fall the burden of its sin;  
Thou all its sorrow dost release  
With murmurs of thy tuneful lin.

When may I in drear autumn days  
Along the course of thy clear stream  
Hear the soft sound of shaken sprays  
Or the lone lapwing's plaintive scream?

Ah! how I love this ancient shrine,  
These walls whereon the flames have fed,  
These pious bells that still repine  
With wistful music overhead!

Now on the road a mother heeds  
Their summoning, far wanderéd;  
Her little daughter whom she leads  
Says "Amen!" as she bows her head.

Where dwelt a vestal sisterhood  
Once saw I cloister'd rivers run  
That poured their solitary flood  
By altars of the Holy One.

Their crystal waters wanderéd  
By arch and plinth in mystic wise  
Where these fair angel-girls did tread  
The blessed fields of Paradise.

My humble brook thy stream in flight—  
So short a life is ours below—  
Reminds me, thine own eremite,  
How Time's swift stream doth ever flow.

## EVARISTE DE PARNY

(1754-1801)

### 105. ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG GIRL

SHE was a childe or hardly more;  
She smiled like Innocence and wore  
The light on Love's own face aglow.  
Few were the moons—the suns in sooth  
Ere her unsullied heart would know  
His fondness break the seal of youth.  
But Heaven unto Death did doom  
The beauty of her early bloom.  
Then unto Heaven did she yield  
Her life, and soft her eyelids sealed

Without a sound of murmuring heard:  
Just as a smile wanes out at will,  
Or bird's song from a drowsy bill  
That leaves the woodland boughs unstirred.

## ANDRÉ CHÉNIER

(1762-1794)

### 106. A YOUNG MAN

I WAS a mite when she was tall and fair;  
She smiled on me and bid me nigh her chair.  
Perched on her lap my childish hand would glide  
Over her hair, her face, her bosom's pride,  
While her hand sometimes, fondling and forbearing,  
Would feign to chide me for its wanton faring.  
And she was kindest when before her bowed  
Poor hapless suitors whom her beauty cowed.  
How oft (alas! that childhood knows no thrill)  
Her kisses on my baby cheek she'd spill!  
While her foil'd lovers whispered at the sight,  
"What treasure wasted! O too happy mite!"

### 107. TO CHROMIS

COME, young Chromis, I love thee, and I am lovely,  
Pale as Dian, and light as her heart is mine!  
Who am tall and proud as the Goddess. The shep-  
herds wonder  
When I go by them at twilight with downcast eyne,  
Whether indeed I am made in the fashion of mortals,  
And gazing, they whisper together, "What beauty  
divine!"



## 108. CLYTIE

MY Manés to Clytie are crying, "Farewell, fair one!  
Is it thou whose footsteps here thro' the grass have  
run ?

Speak, is it thou, O Clytie ? or must I stay  
To wait thee still ? An thou comest not every day  
To muse a little on hours when I did thy will,  
To hold sweet parley, behold this shadow that still  
Doth love thee, ah ! then shall my lone heart wearily  
heave

Within the Elysian calm and my dead bones grieve  
Under the burdening ground. When the dawn winds  
run

Over thy mouth and thy bosom, belovéd one,  
Weep, it is I thy lover whose soul hath fled  
Far from his hallow'd dwelling among the dead,  
Who on thy mouth, O dear one, alone would live.  
O ! weep, and with fond arms open, thy kisses give !"

## 109. THE FLUTE

WHEN I remember I am nigh to weep :  
How he would hold the flute unto my lip,  
And, smiling, set me level with his heart,  
Swearing I beat him at his own smooth art.  
'Twas he who taught my faltering lip to draw  
Sweet breath unbrokenly and without flaw  
Of suavest melody ; my hands unskilled  
By his deft hands over the stops were drilled ;  
'Twas thus I learnt, though still with blundering heed,  
To close the gaps upon the sounding reed.

## 110. THE NYMPH ASLEEP

I KNOW when noon drives shadowward their feet  
With silent tread to find their cool retreat,  
Where thro' the cresses and the pebbled ooze  
The roaming Naiad a random path doth choose.  
I gaze my fill upon the pale nymph shown  
With bare limbs lissom on the green bank prone,  
Who droops on to her hand, by lulling streams  
Her reed-encircled forehead while she dreams.

## 111. THE HEIFER

OLD herder's daughter, thou whose hands are skilled  
To draw the teat till thirty bowls be filled,  
Ware the red heifer with the sullen gaze  
That goes companionless apart to graze.  
Free, she will break away, untamed and fleet.  
Not thro' thy fingers shalt thou draw her teat,  
Unless thou hoist with skill a sleek limb bent  
And hold it slung until her store be spent.

## 112. THE YOUNG CAPTIVE

"THE sickle spares the springing corn,  
The sapling vine-stems drink unshorn  
All summer through dawn's dewy boon;  
And I, as young and fair, am fain  
Though now my cup be hard to drain,  
To hide from Death that calls too soon.  
"Let Stoics meet him unaghast;  
I weep. Before the northern blast  
I bow my head and lift again.

Sad days are nought beside the sweet.  
What pathway never foiled the feet ?  
What sea but hath its hurricane ?

“ Within my bosom Hope doth breed,  
And prison-bars stay not the speed  
Of his wide wings that will not fold;  
Scaped from the fowler's snare he flies  
My blithe sweet bird o'er the wide skies,  
And sings with heart too full to hold.

“ Is death for me ? With hope unquelled  
I breathe, awake or slumber-held,  
Free from remorse for evil done.  
And with each dawn in this dark place  
All eyes speak welcome for the face  
Makes glad the heart of every one.

“ Of milestones on my destined road  
Scarce have I counted one, or strode  
Beyond the trees about my home.  
Scarce have I yet or broken bread  
At the rich board that life doth spread,  
Or sipped the full cup still afoam.

“ My life's at Spring. I would behold  
The harvest yield, and, onward rolled,  
Would like the sun bear high my crown.  
Fair on my stem the garden's queen,  
The dawn-light my young eyes have seen  
And yearn to see the sun go down.

“ Death thou mayst wait. Go! get thee hence.  
Heal thou the wounds of shame's offence ,  
In hearts whereon despair doth brood.

*For me Pan lurks, and sweet Desire  
Hath kisses and the Muses quire.  
I will not die in Maidenhood."*

Thus, sad and captive, as she spoke  
My lyre was stirred and silence broke,  
In pity with her moaning blent.  
And, shaking off my load of care,  
I caught the song in rhyme's soft snare,  
From her sweet lips and innocent.

And thus these rhymes in prison twined  
May tempt some soul of studious mind  
To seek the lady who thus woo'd.  
So fair the face and words that pled  
That unto all were death most dread  
Within her gracious neighbourhood.

## MARIE-JOSEPH CHÉNIER

(1764-1811)

### 113. HYMN

SOURCE of all truth, blasphemed by every liar,  
Eternal guardian of all souls alive,  
Freedom's own God, of Nature the one sire  
In whom all live and thrive;

Thou hast set the world's base under seas unsounded,  
Thine arm hurls wide or thunder-bolt or wind;  
Thou shinest in the sun whose rays unbounded  
Give strength to humankind!

Thy shrines are found in the unfurrowed prairies,  
In cities opulent, in desert caves,  
In lowly valleys and in mountain aeries,  
In sky and under waves.

But for thy glory there is consecrated  
A shrine more noble than the azure air  
In upright hearts where burneth unabated  
The incense of pure pray'r!

## ANTOINE-VINCENT ARNAULT

(1766-1834)

### 114. THE DEAD LEAF

WAIF in the wind, O where  
So swiftly dost thou speed?  
"I nothing know nor heed  
Since thunder toppled sheer  
The oak-tree whence I hung.  
South wind or northern blast,  
Soft-voiced or shrill of tongue,  
Do drive me onward fast  
Who feel nor grief nor fear:  
By wood or valley low,  
By field or mountain height,  
I pass from mortal sight  
Where rose and laurel go."

## BOOK IV

TO  
A. G SHIELL

## PIERRE-JEAN DE BÉRANGER

(1780-1857)

### 115. THE SWALLOWS

ON the Moorish coast, chain-tethered,

Thus a captive soldier spoke:

“ I behold you, shining feathered

Hosts that fly from Winter's yoke.

You whom Hope, O! happy swallows

Leaving France on truant wing,

On your sunward journey follows,

What home-tidings do you bring ?

“ Three long years have passed since dumbly

I implored some token gleaned

From the valley where I humbly

Dreamt of bliss the future screened.

Where the limpid stream runs looping

Round the lilac-scented garth,

Have you glimpsed my cot, and swooping

Gathered tidings of my hearth ?

“ One of you perchance did quicken

Under thatch where I was born;

Of the mother sorely stricken

You have wept the love forlorn.

Prone in death she hears my coming,

Grieving for the laggard beat

Of my footsteps slowly homing:

Do you bear love-tiding sweet ?



“ Is my sister’s wedding over ?  
Have you seen the merry throng  
Toasting bride and toasting lover  
To the sound of happy song ?  
And the brave lads once went leaping  
Into battle, do they see  
Home again—or are they sleeping ?  
Have you news of friends for me ?

“ Over their slain bodies striding  
The despoiling stranger may  
In my home as master biding  
Seek my sister to betray.  
There no more a mother praying,  
Here the heavy chains that cling—  
Swallows from my homeland straying,  
Sorrow’s burden do you bring ?”

#### 116. VILE SPRING !

I SAW her at her window set,  
Myself at mine all winter through;  
And well we loved who’d never met,  
Our kisses crossed the avenue.  
Between the lindens bare of green  
The sight of her made all seem gay;  
But now you’ve made the boughs a screen,  
Vile Spring! Why can’t you keep away ?

Their leafy arches serve to ban  
For me that lovely seraph bright  
I first saw feed her feathered clan  
One morning when the frost was white;

They summoned her with songs that so  
Became the cue for Cupid's play:  
There's nothing lovelier than snow!  
Vile Spring! Why can't you keep away?

When she awakes you are the cause  
I cannot see her leave her bed  
As fresh as when Aurora draws  
The rosy curtains overhead.  
Now too at night I'm left in doubt  
What time my fair star hides her ray,  
And when she blows her candle out:  
Vile Spring! Why can't you keep away?

'Tis Winter that I'm pining for:  
Ah! what I'd give to hear again  
The sound of pelted snows that pour  
In music on the window-pane.  
What good are all your flowers to me,  
Your zephyrs and your suns of May,  
When her sweet smile I cannot see?  
Vile Spring! Why can't you keep away?

## MARCELINE DESBORDES-VALMORE

(1786-1859)

### 117. THE ROSES OF SAADI

THIS morning I had roses for thee found,  
But I did hold them in my girdle bound  
So tightly that they tumbled to the ground.

The bonds were broken, and the swift wind bore  
Thy gathered roses to the sea-brimmed shore  
Over the water to return no more.

The waves seemed red and flaming where they went.  
This eve my raiment is still redolent:  
Breathe on my bosom, love, their odours blent.

## ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE

(1790-1869)

### 118. THE LAKE

THUS ever drawn toward far shores uncharted,  
Into eternal darkness borne away,  
May we not ever on Time's sea, unthwarted,  
Cast anchor for a day?

O lake! Now hardly by a year grown older,  
And nigh the well-known waves her eyes should  
Behold! I sit alone on this same boulder [greet,  
Thou knewest for her seat.

Thus didst thou murmur in thy rocky haven,  
Thus didst thou shatter on its stony breast;  
Thus fell the wind-flung foam on sands engraven  
Where her dear feet had prest.

One eve—rememberest thou?—in silence drifting,  
'Twixt deep and sky no sound had echo save  
Afar the rowers dipping oars and lifting  
Over thy waters suave.

When all at once a voice that made earth wonder  
From the charmed shore drove all the echoes wide,  
And rapt the wave, not fain as I nor fonder,  
And with sweet words did chide:

“ Stay thou thy flight, O Time! and happy hours  
Trail by with laggard feet!  
Let all the savour of your delight be ours  
Of all our days most sweet!

“ Too many grieving souls to thee are praying;  
Nay, leave not these immune;  
Bear off with thee their sorrows undelaying;  
Leave happy souls their boon.

“ Nay, but in vain I ask one gracious hour;  
Time flies and will not hark.  
I bid the night abide and dawn doth shower  
His splendour down the dark.

“ Ah! let us love, my Love, for Time is heartless,  
Be happy while you may!  
Man hath no Heaven and Time's coast is chartless.  
He speeds; we pass away!”

Churl Time, and can it be sweet moments cherished,  
Wherein love fills our lives with teeming bliss,  
Speed far away and be as swiftly perished  
As days when sorrow is ?

Nay! Ere we go may we not leave sure traces ?  
Nay! Passed for ever ? Beyond all reprieve ?  
What Time bestows on us, what Time effaces  
He nevermore shall give ?

O! everlasting night, deep pit unsounded,  
What dost thou with engulphéd days untold?  
Speak! Wilt thou yield us back the bliss unbounded  
Once ravished from our hold?

O! lake, mute rocks, caves, leafy woodland shading,  
You whom Time spares or clothes with newer sheen,  
Keep of this night, fair Nature, keep unfading  
The memory ever green!

In all thy calms and all thy tempests blending,  
Fair lake, and in thy forelands' smiling fronts,  
In thy dark pines and thy wild cliffs impending  
Over thy crystal founts,

In the winds passing, with a trembling lightness,  
Heard in the echoes that thy shores throw far,  
Seen in the beams that fall with sheeny whiteness  
Wave-borne from the clear star!

Let moaning breezes thro' the rushes gliding,  
All perfume stirring thy sweet air above,  
All seen or heard or breathéd bear this tiding,  
"Hereby they once did love!"

#### 119. THE BUTTERFLY

COMING with the daffodils and dying with the roses,  
Wafted by the zephyr's wing athwart the spaces  
high,  
Lurking in the flower's bloom or e'er its breast un-  
closes,  
Reeling with sweet draughts of scent, and light,  
and deep blue sky;

Shaking wide its dusty wings and like the breezes  
breasting  
Burdenless and innocent the sky's eternal steep:—  
Thus doth fare the butterfly like hope that never  
resting,  
Rifles all but cannot quench desire that ever questing,  
Bears it home to heaven again for lasting joy and  
deep.

## 120. MEMORY AND HOPE

I REBEHOLD you, O belovéd Dead  
About these doors and windows gathered;  
With hands held out your own I seem to seize,  
As water to the eye shows mirrored faces  
That lean to meet our own in fond embraces  
Till on love-kindled lips our kisses freeze.

O! Thou who madest memory, must it be  
For nought at all? . . . Nay, we must render Thee,  
When life is over in one stream to pour  
What hath gone past and what is beyond knowing,  
The two halves of our life together flowing,  
This saying "Never," and that "For evermore."

Shall not this bygone Eden that we knew  
In our Eternal Life have shape and hue?  
For where Time is not shall not all Time be?  
In that calm breast whereto our souls are cleaving  
Shall we not find our loved ones beyond grieving  
About the hearth-stone of Eternity?

## 121. THE WEST

THE sea grew silent like a seething bowl  
That falls as the flame dwindle; backward led  
Her waves still fuming in their wrath did roll  
As seeking sleep in her unfathomed bed;

And the spent sun-star in his cloudy race  
Stayed on the waves a rayless orb that sank,  
Then plunged one half of his ensanguined face,  
A flaming ship that the horizon drank;

Half heaven grew wan, and swooned away the wind  
On the limp canvas, still and mute; the host  
Of shadows fell, and under their gray blind  
Both sky and water were together lost;

And in my soul that waned as the day slept  
The sounds of earthly commerce no more stirred;  
And something in me as in Nature wept  
In grief and hope and gratitude unheard.

And on the west a sudden door flung wide  
Poured floods of light that surged upon the gaze;  
The empurpled sky was like a tent to hide  
A hearthstone burning with unmeasured rays;

Clouds, winds, and waters to the blazing arc  
Seemed all to haste as though a final doom  
Should fall on all things with the falling dark,  
And Nature perish in a world of gloom.

Thereto the dust of evening was fanned,  
Thereto the white spray of the waters set;  
And long and sad, unconsciously I scanned  
The light they followed, with wide eyelids wet.

Till all was hidden; like an empty cup  
 My soul was even as the horizon hid;  
 But lo! in me a sudden thought rose up  
*As on the desert a lone pyramid:*

*O light! where goest thou ? O flameless sphere!*  
*O clouds, winds, waters, whither do you race ?*  
 Dust, foam, and night; you eyes; thou soul, speak  
clear!  
 Where is the goal to which you speed apace ?

To Thee, Great All, of whom the sun's a ray,  
 In whom Night, Day, and the deep Spirit sink,  
 To whose divine impulsion all things sway,  
 Vast sea of Being that all life doth drink!

## EMILE DESCHAMPS

(1791-1871)

### 122. DO NOT BELIEVE

LADY, they will tell you, " You are foolish to believe  
him!

Why then will you suffer more than he for all his  
grief ?

A poet, all his sorrow fades away as words relieve him;  
 His sighs are spent in cadences, he sings for his  
relief.

" You leave him and he languishes, he dies . . . until  
to-morrow.

And then with his belovéd art rebuilds the world  
aright.



I SAW in dream a fair unknown  
 More gentle than a sleeping child,  
 With sudden laughter lightly blown,  
 A fay with golden locks and wild.  
 'Mid daughters of the earth she flew  
 With Ariel for her kindred sprite,  
 And bore us news of heaven's delight . . .  
 I saw you, and my dream was true!

I heard in dream a seraph fair  
Sweet-singing on our human way;  
And I, of some strange charm aware,  
Stretched out my hands from far away;  
And like the tides that swell the sea  
I felt my full heart overbrim . . .  
And all my life in tears grow dim . . .

It is a dream no more to me!

I dreamed; to me so dark the day  
The hours of sleep are boon and dear,  
And my deep sorrow to allay  
One night the holy child drew near,  
Ah! then to what must I give heed?  
I heard her trembling voice above,  
"Nay dear, thou must not die for love."  
Alas! it was a dream indeed!

## ALFRED DE VIGNY

(1797-1863)

### 124. THE SNOW

WHEN barren boughs above us wave,  
And snow lies deep above the mire;  
When all the earth is stone to grave,  
And lonely poplars upward spire;

When, snow on wing, the rook doth rock,  
Hard-frozen on his lofty perch,  
As stilly as the weather-cock  
Upon the steeple of the church;

Ah! then how sweet to hear the brave  
Old stories of the days of yore.  
When barren boughs above us wave,  
And snow lies deep, and earth lies frore.

## 125. THE SHEPHERD'S HUT

If thy heart, groaning under life's rude burden,  
Writhe in its faring like an eagle hurt  
Trailing a weary way with proud wing shattered,  
Under a doom of grievous pain inert;  
If it but beat when its red tide is streaming,  
If there be hidden from all sight or seeming  
Love's light that once for it the horizon girt;

If thy soul, shackled as my own sad soul is,  
By fetters and long bitter fare fordome,  
On the bare galley let the oar lie nerveless,  
Lean wanly o'er the wave and weep alone;  
If o'er the tide to unknown havens steering,  
At thy bare shoulder's sight thou shudder, fearing  
The brand of felony clear-scarred thereon;

And if thy body stirred by secret passion,  
Shy and aloof be dreadful of man's gaze;  
If with thy beauty thou wouldst dwell serenely  
Withdrawn unsullied from the world's foul ways;  
If thy speech wither in the wind of slander,  
If thy brow redden lest thy fair thought wander  
In some lewd mind that, seeing and hearing, slays;

Then get thee hence, leave all the towns behind thee,  
Nor halt on ways that soil the feet that fare;  
From thought's high pinnacle behold our cities  
Man's bane, foredoomed to endless serfage there;

With fields and forests for thy sacred homing  
Free as the sea round darkened islands foaming,  
Cross the sweet fields, flow'r-laden, without care.

Nature awaits thee in her solemn silence,  
And round thy feet the lawny mists exhale,  
As far away the sun's last sigh sets swaying  
The lovely lilies like swung censers frail;  
The forest aisles grow dim; on waters dimmer  
The willow sets unsullied leaves a-shimmer  
And the far mountain hides in evening's veil.

The friendly dusk now slumbers in the valley,  
On the green herbage and the golden lawn,  
Below shy rushes where hid founts are welling,  
Below the dreamy woodland far withdrawn;  
It flies, and furtive thro' the wild vine shivers;  
It throws a grey shroud o'er the steamy rivers,  
And leaves the flowers of night half fain of dawn.

On ~~mine~~ own hill the heath is rank, and hunters  
The ling and bracken scarce can trample through;  
High on their brows the lofty wands that waver  
Shelter the shepherd and the stranger too.  
Hide there thy love and thy divine misdoing;  
If grass be scanty, or the bent blades blowing,  
Forth will I bring my Shepherd's Hut to view.

Smoothly it runs upon its four wheels stirring,  
With roof flush with thy brow and eyes, my guest;  
Thy cheeks' own colour as of palest coral  
Tinting the night-car on its noiseless quest.  
Its sill is scented and its alcove roomy  
Where we shall find a silent couch and gloomy,  
Flow'r-heapt for our two heads grown fain of rest.

I shall see, if thou wilt, the snowy moorlands,  
 Or lands whereon love's star her light doth pour,  
 Or those wind-ravaged, or where snows beleaguer,  
 Or where the dark Pole hardens to the core.  
 We will together as fair chance may beckon.  
 Of time or of the world why should I reckon ?  
 All shall be lovely that thine eyes adore.

\* \* \* \* \*

She said, " I am the empty stage grown passive,  
 From tremors of the mummer's tread immune;  
 My emerald stairs, my courts of alabaster,  
 My marble columns by the Gods were hewn;  
 I hear nor shout nor sigh; nor, calm or stormy,  
 Feel the slow human comedy pass o'er me,  
 That looks to heav'n in vain for bane or boon.

" Onward I roll, unseeing and unheeding,  
 By ant-heaps or the swarming hives of men;  
 For me alike their dwelling and their ashes;  
 The names of nations are beyond my ken  
 Who bare them. I am grave whom men call mother;  
 In Winter's icy shroud your lives I smother,  
 Nor heed your worship when Spring come agen.

" Before you I was lovely with sweet odour,  
 Far on the wind my streaming locks flung sheer;  
 On skiey pathways immemorial faring;  
 On the smooth axle of a God-like sphere  
 Spun onward. After you thro' void space wheeling,  
 Still shall I soar aloof from human feeling,  
 With brow and breast that cleave the all silent air."

Thus spake she with her proud voice full of sorrow,  
 And in my heart I hated her, and knew

Our blood was in her tides; her fields and forests  
Were fed with our own marrow as with dew.  
I said unto my eyes towards her yearning,  
"Gaze elsewhere, and weep not for her spurning;  
Give thy love only where thou canst not rue."

Who twice shall know thy tender grace and gesture,  
Mild angel, and most mournful with thy sighs?  
Who like to thee shall bring such blissful solace  
As thou from the wan radiance of thine eyes?  
So sweet to us the swaying of thy slant face is,  
So sweet to us thy prone lithe body's graces,  
And thy pure smile in love's or sorrow's guise.

Live on cold Nature, and for us rekindle  
Forehead and feet with thy predestined might;  
Live and disdain, since thou art as a Goddess,  
Meek man who over thee hath kingly right.  
More than thy kingdom and thy thriftless glory  
I hold the grandeur of our human story;  
Nor will I cry to thee, in love's despite.

#### 126. THE SOUND OF THE HORN

I LOVE the sound of the horn in the deep, dim wood-  
land,  
Whether it wail with the doe that is nigh to death,  
Or cry the hunter's farewell on the echoes waning,  
From leaf to leaf borne on by the north wind's  
breath.

How often alone, in the shadow at midnight straying,  
I have smiled to hear it, how often have wept still  
more!

For I seemed to hear the rumour of things foreboding  
The death of the Paladin knights that lived of yore.

O azure Mountain! O land that my heart is fain of!  
Franzona fells, and summits of Marboré,  
Fountains that fall with the drifted snows for a burden,  
Torrents and brooks of the Pyrenees' chill spray,

Mountains frozen or fertile, throning the seasons,  
Who have ice for crown and the meadows about  
your feet,  
'Tis there would I dwell, 'tis there would I wait to  
hearken  
The far-borne sound of the horn blow sad and  
sweet.

A traveller strayed mayhap when the air is stilly,  
Lifts up this brazen voice that the night repeats;  
With the sound of his cadenced songs for a while is  
blending  
The tiny bell of the tethered lamb that bleats.

A doe that heareth the sound flies not but rather  
Stands still as a stone on the hill-top, while waters  
chime  
In vast uproar with the music for ever calling  
From the old romance of the immemorial time.

Souls of the Paladins, say, do your ghosts still haunt  
us?  
Is it you who speak to us still in the blare of the  
horn?

Roncevaux! 'Ronceaux! deep in thy sombre valley  
The shade of the noble Roland is still forlorn!

## VICTOR HUGO

(1802-1885)

## 127. THE SONG OF THE PROW-GILDERS

WE are the gilders of the prows.  
The whirl-winds the smooth sea arouse,  
    Spun onward like a turning wheel;  
They fill the hollows of the deep  
With shining spume and therein sweep  
    The galleys on a slanting keel.

The squall whips round, the sly winds veer;  
Loud the dark Archer, sounding clear,  
    Holds the dread trumpet to his lips.  
Mid this bewilderment 'tis we,  
Though the wroth waves lurch giddily,  
    Send forth, gold-helmed, the spectre ships.

For spectre-like their golden helms  
Thrust thro' the flood and wind that whelms;  
    Proud from our slips they take the sea,  
A dauntless mark for lightning's lance  
And a stern, terror-striking glance  
    To perils lurking stealthily.

Under the cooling leafage go;  
Keep shut thy full seraglio;  
    Let not the veils down fall, O Sire,  
From that strange throng that yestermorn  
Stark nakéd to the mart were borne  
    For barter to the highest buyer.



What matters that to wind or wave,  
A fair slave or a dusky slave,  
From Alep or from Ispahan ?  
From thee alike all shrink away.  
How wouldst thou then that that should sway  
The wild and wondrous ocean ?

Each sates and spends his royal whim;  
The sceptre's thine; the storm's to him  
And lightning; each hath blades to smite;  
Thou hast thy scimitar, and he  
His wrath; as of the wind the sea,  
Men murmur at the Sultan's might.

We toil for ocean and for king.  
Loud at our twofold task we sing!  
O swarthy Lord of high renown,  
Thy stony heart, thy steely eye  
Shall not to drowsy birds deny  
Their slumber-time when dusk comes down.

For Nature holds eternal sway  
Nor falters; God's spread wing's alway  
A shield whereunder all may hide;  
We sing within the stilly shade  
Blithe songs that rise all unafraid  
Of black reefs hid beneath the tide.

Let these our masters bear the palm,  
Be crowned with laurel; we are calm  
So that they leave for us aloof  
The myriad stars, so clouds still fly  
On their swift courses steadily  
Unheeding any man's behoof.

June shines, and flow'r on flow'r unfurls;  
The rose buds on white-breasted girls;  
There's sport and mirth; the craftsmen sing.  
Ah! then is penance hard to dree,  
And the shy fawns light-footed flee  
And set the leashed hounds quivering.

O Sultan, though thy life be spent  
Lapped round with soothest ravishment,  
Yet shalt thou die, and be no more.  
Then live and reign—for life is sweet.  
The fallow deer with folded feet  
Lie dreaming on the forest floor.

The mounted stairway leads thee back  
To lowly earth; bright fires turn black;  
The grave cries "Lo!" to humankind.  
Time's changing moons unplume the bird;  
The slow resurgent tides are stirred  
And dying voices freight the wind.

The air is warm; bare women dive  
Into the pool; buds sunward strive  
In heedless throngs; all's mirth and love.  
White lustre shimmers on the mere;  
The woodland roses upward peer,  
Self-mirrored in the stars above.

Thy galley we have gilded bright.  
Four hundred shackled rowers smite  
Out from the port the insurgent waves.  
She curbs the wind, she climbs the tide;  
On either hand the rowlocks slide  
Beneath thy groaning galley-slaves.

## 128. SONG

TOWARD your scented garden, Sweet,  
Would flutter all my linkéd words,  
If with soft wings my rhymes might beat  
The air like birds.

Like sparks along an airy path  
Your happy home they'd haste to find,  
Had they but wings for flight as hath  
The wingéd mind.

By night, by day, still true to you,  
They'd fly with eager winnowings,  
If but my limping verses flew  
With Love's own wings.

## 129. "SINCE FROM THY BRIMMING CHALICE . .

SINCE from thy brimming chalice I have sipped; -  
Since thy soft hands have held my blanchéd brow;  
Since I have breathed the redolence that slipped  
From thy sweet soul in earthy shadow now;

Since it was mine to hear from thee such speech  
As made the shy heart blossom in its shrine,  
Thy grief and mirth up-well, thy mouth beseech  
My mouth, thine eyes a mirror unto mine;

Since I have seen upon my brow abide  
One spark from thy brief star's now veiled rays;  
Since I have borne upon my life's full tide  
One roseleaf from the stem of thy sweet days;

Now can I flout the swift years in their flight:  
Go by! Go by! for me Time cannot scathe!  
Speed on your way with your dead garlands dight;  
Within my soul's a flower for ever rathe!

Your wing may smite but never a drop be spilt  
From that full vase that, slaking, grows not less.  
My soul shall flame unsmothered of your silt!  
My love outlive your blind forgetfulness!

## 130. GUITAR SONG

GASTIBELZA, gun on shoulder,  
Started this strange song:—  
None of you knew Donna Sabine,  
None among the throng?  
Sing and dance, good village people  
For the sun falls steadily . . .  
There's a wind blows o'er the mountain  
• That will madden me.

None of you knew Donna Sabine  
My own lady fair,  
Mothered by the old Maugrabine  
Out of Antequer?  
She who like an owl at nightfall  
From her tower cried mournfully . . .  
There's a wind blows o'er the mountain  
That will madden me.

Dance and sing. Make hay, good people,  
While the sun doth shine.  
She was young, her joyous glances  
Made the heart to pine.

Spare this old man with the urchin  
    *Just a mite for charity . . .*  
There's a wind blows o'er the mountain  
    That will madden me.

Truly but the Queen beside her  
    Had seemed poorly graced  
When she crossed Toledo's river  
    In her bodice laced.  
Round her neck a linked chaplet  
    Old beyond all memory . . .  
There's a wind blows o'er the mountain  
    That will madden me.

Said the King himself beholding  
    How my love was fair,  
"For her kiss, or smile, or only  
    One strand of her hair,  
Royal nephew, I would barter  
    Spain and all I hold in fee . . ."  
There's a wind blows o'er the mountain  
    That will madden me.

Did I truly love this lady ?  
    This I know alone:  
Had she but looked kindly on me  
    I, poor dog, had gone  
Happily ten years to prison  
    Captive under lock and key . . .  
There's a wind blows o'er the mountain  
    That will madden me.

On a summer day all sunny  
    Life and honey'd air,  
She went streamward with her sister  
    Both to wanton there.

And I saw her slender playmate's  
Foot agleam, and *her* bare knee . . .  
There's a wind blows o'er the mountain  
That will madden me.

When I saw this child, I, shepherd  
Watching o'er my fold  
Thought it was Queen Cleopatra  
Whom I did behold;  
She who led the world's Lord, Cæsar,  
Tethered, so says History . . .  
There's a wind blows o'er the mountain  
That will madden me.

Dance and sing, good village people,  
Ere the night be old.  
Sabine all her love and beauty  
To Count Sarden sold;  
All for a gold ring she bartered,  
All for pride and jewelry . . .  
There's a wind blows o'er the mountain.  
That will madden me.

I am weary; on this bench here  
Suffer me to stay.  
Now hath Sabine with her Master  
Gone the truant way!  
On the road that leads to Sarden,  
If, indeed, that road it be . . .  
There's a wind blows o'er the mountain  
That will madden me.

Past my hut I saw her hasting  
Swiftly; that was all.  
Now, from hour to hour I sicken,  
Full of tears and gall.

Idler, gird thy belt with daggers,  
To the barren wild win free . . .  
There's a wind blows o'er the mountain  
That hath maddened me!

## 131. THE VISION

ALOFT a white-robed angel I beheld;  
His splendour the loud tempest's anger quelled  
And won to silence the far murmuring sea.  
"Why comest thou, angel, this dark night to me?"  
I asked him. He replied, "Thy soul to take."  
I trembled for in woman's guise he spake,  
And with my hands stretched orth to him, I said  
"What shall be left me when thou shalt be fled?"  
He answered not, but all the heaven grew dim,  
O'erwhelmed with shadow. Thereon I cried to him  
"Where wilt thou bear me? Show me in what place."  
Still was he silent. "O farer thro' blue space,  
Art Death or Life?" I cried. Thereon did roll  
All night's deep shadow o'er my ravished soul;  
The angel form grown dim said "Lo! I am Love."  
But his dark brow was fair as day's. Above,  
Thro' his wide wings, beyond his shadowy gaze,  
I saw the starry multitudes ablaze.

## 132. CHILDHOOD

THE infant sang; the mother, life near over,  
Upon her darkened bed lay moaning, white;  
While Death above in the dim air did hover.  
I heard Death's rattle and the singing mite.

His playful babble sounding by the skylight,  
Told all the bliss from five brief summers drawn;  
His mother when he fell asleep with twilight,  
Beside his tender breathing coughed till dawn.

They bore her to the grave for her last slumber;  
But the child's happy singing did not fail:  
Grief is a fruit; God wills not it should cumber  
The slender branches for its load too frail.

## 133. JUNE NIGHTS

WHEN the long day dies in summer and flowers are  
closing,  
They scatter their odours that thrill thro' the drowsy  
sense,  
And our eyelids fall, while the sense, alert, lies dozing  
And behind our slumber we gaze thro' a cloudless  
lens.

Then the stars are brighter, the dark has more soft  
concealment,  
And over the dome of heav'n is a hue of day,  
And the shy, dim dawn, awaiting the sun's fulfilment,  
Lurks all night long low down on the skyline gray.

## 134. THE SLEEPER'S PRAYER

AS Laura to the Florentine  
Draw near, Belovéd, to my bed;  
And, passing, waft thy breath divine  
My mouth for sign  
Shall be half-openéd!



Over my sad brow when the night  
 Moves slowly with her darkened dreams,  
 Gaze downward as with starry light . . .  
 My inward sight  
 Shall then be dazed with beams!

Over my kindled mouth where lies  
 The God-lit flame of love divine,  
 Stoop with thy seraph's kiss, and rise  
 A woman . . . Wise,  
 My soul shall wake to thine!

### 135. THE GRAVE AND THE ROSE

NOW Grave to Rose complaineth,  
 "With tears the dawn down raineth  
 What dost thou, Love's own bloom?"  
 And Rose to Grave replieth,  
 "What dost thou when down lieth  
 Love's self in thy dark womb?"

Saith Rose, "These tears down spilling,  
 With honeyed breath distilling  
 To odours I do bring."  
 Saith Grave, "O blossom grieving,  
 Each soul of Earth's bereaving  
 I fledge with angel's wing."

### 136. "I WILL SET OUT TO-MORROW . . ."

I WILL set out to-morrow when the dawn-light whitens  
 all the land.  
 O my belovéd, well I know thou waitest still for  
 me;

And I will over forest ways or where doth rise and  
fall the land.

I cannot bear to breathe in air so far away from  
thee.

And I will walk with fixed gaze on thoughts that  
cannot stray for thee,

And all without me shall be dumb, and all devoid  
of light,

Alone, unknown, with downcast eyes and clasped  
hands that pray for thee,

So sad of mind, I shall be blind nor know the day  
from night.

I shall not heed the sunset gold that down the west  
is raining light,

Nor ships with swollen sail that to the haven onward  
steer,

And when I shall be come to thee, by waxing or by  
waning light

Then will I lay this holly-spray and heather on  
thy bier.

137. "O FRANCE, WHEN THOU ART PRONE  
AND BOUND "

O FRANCE, when thou art prone and bound  
Beneath the tyrant's ruthless heel,  
A voice from the deep caves shall sound  
And rive thy chains of steel.

The exile watching wave and sky  
Shall raise a voice that men shall hear  
Like words that in a dream drift by  
Above their darkened sphere.

His words of menace shall be seen—

His words that are as lightning's light—  
Like swords that fill the dark with sheen,  
In hidden hands that smite.

Marble shall rock and mountains shake

Athwart the sunset; trees that bear  
Green boughs shall rend their locks and rake  
The shadow-compassed air.

His words shall be a horn that cries

Shrill havoc on the ravening crows,  
Or as a shuddering wind that flies  
By graves where the grass grows.

O'er newer races Time doth weld

They like a thundercloud shall break;  
And if the quick in sloth be held,  
The ashamed dead shall wake.

### 138. THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR

GIVE heed unto this little lad

For great is he, our God's own shrine,  
A light, ere earthly vesture clad,  
That shone in heaven's own hyaline.

Bestowed by God for us on earth

Out of his endless treasuring,  
God's wisdom shineth in his mirth,  
His kiss bespeaks God's pardoning.

His soft light beams upon us all,

Alas! Joy is his rightful path;

An-hungered, angel tears down fall;  
A-cold, all heaven thrills with wrath.

If sinless ones have want for dower,  
Man's shameful sin's arraigned thereby;  
He holds the angels in his power.  
What thunder hurtles terribly

When God doth find them here sore hurt  
Within the darkness of our day,  
Who sent them to us wing-begirt,  
And finds them ragged in array!

### 139. THE SOWER

NOW falls the dusk I sit in peace  
Beneath this gateway and behold  
The ebbing daylight bring release  
From toil by wood and wold.

With stirring at my heart I heed  
Above the furrows night has steeped  
A ragged sower throwing seed  
Of harvests still unreaped.

His tall black silhouette above  
The tillage deep strides on. How brave  
Must be his faith that time will move  
The grain within its grave.

He crosses the unending plain,  
Now back, now forth; with open palm  
He flings it wide and fills again,  
While here I muse in calm;



## 141. WINTRY WEATHER

NOW Winter turns the roadway white.

In evil snares thy days are held.

The bitter wind thy hand doth bite,

In frosty hate thy joy is quelled.

The furrows fill with snow amain.

The light grows dimmer. . . . Now make fast

Against the sleet thy shutter'd pane,

Thy door against the northern blast.

But leave thy heart unshut to light,

A holy window. If the hue

Of light be lost still God may smite

With splendour of his glory through.

Mistrust the mortal fruit of bliss,

Mistrust man's hateful lust of strife,

Mistrust all priestly mysteries,

But still believe in love, O life!

In love as pure as at the first

Still shining thro' life's prison bars,

Whose draught is wine to human thirst,

Whose light is as the sheen of stars!

## 142. THE SWALLOW'S NEST

INTO the church with pray'r go by,

But throw a glance as in you go

At this small nest that's hanging nigh

The portico.

On temples resonant with pray'r  
The swallow all untrained and true,  
Doth build a little shrine more fair,  
More full of blue.

The old porch moss doth softer grow  
Round fledgelings that the summer brings,  
And they grow quick in the warm glow  
Of Christ's own wings.

The shrine where shadows long have lain  
Is thrilled with babble of delight;  
The nest is full of mirth. The fane  
Is full of night.

The never-flinching saints that hear  
The arching doorways shake above,  
Are glad to feel themselves so near  
To spring and love.

The virgins and the seers incline  
From their gaunt eyries fain to brood  
Over these hives of birds that shrine  
Love's holy food.

A bird upon an angel falls;  
The apostle smiles upon his shelf,  
"Good day to you, brave saint!" he calls.  
"Good day, winged elf!"

In shrines is beauty manifest,  
And high they soar on heaven's blue;  
But in the summer swallow's nest  
God dwelleth too.

## 143. ON THE DUNES

NOW that my tasks are done, and fast  
Life dwindles like a torch's glow,  
Now that I seek the grave, down-cast  
By weight of years and weight of woe;

Now that belovéd things gone by  
Fade from my sight as though drawn in  
By some dark whirlpool of the sky  
On summits once I yearned to win.

Now that I say, "We yet shall soar,  
The lie that shall stand revealed with dawn!"—  
I am sad, and wander on the shore  
Like one into his dream withdrawn.

Beyond the sandhills without pause  
I watch unending breakers play,  
Cloud-flocks that fly the vulture claws  
Of wind that seeks a fleecy prey;

The roaring tide, the humming air  
I hear, and sound of swathe and scythe,  
And in my musing mind compare  
The weary voices and the blithe;

And often prone along some dune  
I lie where scant the grass is sown,  
Until I see the dazed moon  
With her foreboding eyes look down.

Athwart the gulf of darkened space  
She mounts and sheds a light of dreams,



And each stares in the other's face—  
The man that weeps, the moon that beams.

Where now are fled the days that waned ?  
Are all who erst have known me dead ?  
And are my dazzled eyeballs drained  
Of all the light that youth once shed ?

Is all gone by ? Forlorn and frail,  
My voice unanswered dies away.  
O winds ! O waves ! And must I fail  
Like gusty wind or driven spray ?

Shall all I loved be lost to sight ?  
Within my soul there falls the gloom.  
O Earth whose peaks are veiled in night,  
Am I the ghost, and thou the tomb ?

Are life, love, joy and hope all spent ?  
I wait, I ask, I still implore.  
And all my urns are earthward bent  
To find one drop still left to pour.

How nigh remorse is memory !  
How everything with tears is rife !  
O Death, how cruel cold thy key  
Within the wards of human life !

Yet louder than the wind that drives  
The endless billows, my thought stirs :  
Summer is come, the thistle thrives  
Blue-flowered on the sandy spurs.

## 144. THE COLOSSUS OF RHODES

MY name is Light. I am seventy cubits high.

Ever I watch the unbridled waters beat,  
A steadfast beacon. Under my huge feet  
Lies Rhodes. My never-sleeping eyes descry  
The snow-capt hills whereon the eagles fly.

The vast wheels of the star-led seasons fleet;  
Man lives and dies; the moon-drawn tides retreat;  
Fresh bales for barter on the flat wharves lie;

Day shines; the tempest slumbers or shows ire;

Warder of the blue vast I stand alway  
A fixed sentinel for ever ware;  
Nor dawn nor twilight can these eyeballs tire  
That watch sails fill, and waves like hounds that bay,  
In the deep trance of my Colossal stare.

## JULIEN-AUGUSTE-PELAGE BRIZEUX

(1803-1858)

## 145. THE NEST

THIS eve I left the flocks to stray and crop the grass  
with no one by  
Because she so desired a nest, that little lass as old  
as I.

I bore my treasure home: a nest the tiny finches  
fashion deft,  
As firm as ever mason wrought, as soft as ever  
weaver weft.



Nor give short measure. The Lord Christ  
Shall pay you well for all your care.

Fire-winged, the holy Seraphin  
Down to the Earth shall swiftly spin,  
Saint Michael with his golden scales  
To weigh your sinful soul therein.

Ah, then you'll need another bed!  
A pad of hay shall prop your head,  
And you within the winding-sheet  
In lidded coffin shall lie dead.

Our song is a heart-rending thing;  
All men must weep when we do sing.  
Pray for your forgotten dead;  
God sends the summons that we bring.

## EVARISTE BOULAY-PATY

(1804-1864)

### 147. THE BOUT

TWO wrestlers in a ruthless grapple strive  
For triumph; but thro' long, long years doth toil  
One whose fair brow the dew-filled flowers assoil  
Who seems in his young lustihood to thrive;  
The other an old man whose hard thews would rive  
The thing they clasp, but lean with long turmoil,  
Dull-eyed, wan-faced, with shrunken hands that coil:  
'Tis Death that holdeth man within his gyve.

Death tightens his fell hold until at last  
Man underneath his pallid foe falls down  
Who thereon cries, "Behold a life o'erthrown!"  
Man for a moment knows his might doth dwindle.  
But rising, with his soul Death's self doth blast,  
And even in dying feels his glory kindle.

## CHARLES-AUGUSTIN SAINTE-BEUVE

(1804-1869)

### 148

SLEEPLESS upon my bed, my spirit's force  
Elate upon a soundless flood did float,  
When sudden hooves athwart the sky grew hot  
And flashed the leven like a white-maned horse;  
Thunder behind was goad to his swift course,  
And the earth quaked beneath his chariot;  
All beasts straight fell on stillness fear-begot,  
Mute in their lairs as with some wild remorse.

But my soul kindled at the lightning spark;  
My breast rose as each flash upon the dark  
Tore off some wrapping that had bound me fast.  
More than in storm God's voice within my mind  
Spake loud; and as a viol to the wind  
My spirit rose reverberate on the blast.

## AUGUSTE BARBIER

(1805-1882)

## 149. THE IDOL

O LIMP-HAIRED Corsican! thy France was fair  
By Messidor's wide sunbeams lit!  
Like a rebellious steed that will not bear  
Or golden rein or iron bit;  
A tameless filly whose rude flanks did smoke  
With blood of royal kings outpoured,  
She proudly trod the ancestral soil and broke  
At last from tyranny abhorred.  
Never had she yet felt the mastering hand  
Harass and goad with whip and rein;  
Her back by saddle never had been spanned,  
Nor dragged a foreign chain;  
Ungroomed her wild mane; like a gypsy wench  
Proud-eyed, her haunches swayed  
On upright limbs; she made the whole world blench  
Unquiet when she neighed.

## 150. MICHAEL ANGELO

HOW sad a glance, how shrunk a face thou hast  
Michael sublime, old shaper of rude stone!  
Never a tear have those sad eyelids shown;  
Thou hast gazed like Dante on all mirth aghast.  
The Muse did suckle thee too well, and fast  
Art hath espoused thee, thou art hers alone;  
Thro' threescore years of toiling thou hast known  
No solace save on her chill bosom vast.

Thy life knew but one blessing: even as God  
To seal the rock with thine immortal might;  
And fearful were the feet that nigh thee trod.  
Like to a lion with wild mane grown white,  
When thy worn life drew to its period  
Renowned but weary thou didst leave the light.

## FELIX ARVERS

(1806-1850)

### 151

MY soul doth grope, a darkened way I go,  
And that deep wound Love dealt in sudden might  
Must go unstanched, unhealed; nor may I show  
My hurt to her who heedlessly did smite;  
Nor dare I plead for succour in my plight,  
Nor that her hand should any boon bestow,  
But follow near her though she never know  
My doom of loneliness and utter night.

But she whom God made of such gentleness,  
Will go her way without or heed or care  
For my love's murmur where her footsteps fare;  
And each day's task with pious heart will bless.  
Reading these lines she'll say, still unaware,  
"Who was this woman, then?" and never guess.

## GERARD DE NERVAL

(1808-1855)

## 152. THE GLORIFIED

WHAT doth our loves befall?  
They lie far underground!  
And happier they who all  
Have fairer dwelling found!

They are nigh the seraph throng  
In skies that have no shade,  
And worship with sweet song  
God's Mother, the pure Maid.

O spotless spouse unta'en!  
O maiden-flower in leaf!  
Girl-lover left in pain  
Alone and scarred with grief!

Deep everlasting mirth  
Shines out from your bright eyes  
Brands once put out on Earth,  
Flame on in Paradise!

## 153. FANTASY

THERE is an air for which I'd give all else  
That Mozart, Weber, or Rossini wrote,  
An old air full of languid, mournful spells  
That moves me only by its charm remote.

And every time I hear its music heave  
My soul grows young again 'neath Louis Treize,



Two hundred years ago . . . I see at eve  
A fair green slope whereon the sunbeams blaze;

And then a red-brick castle cornice-bound  
In stone, with crimson gleaming from the lead,  
Engirdled by great parks, and moat-enwound  
With flowery waters by a river fed.

And then a lady at a window high,  
Blond-haired, black-eyed, in olden garments clad . . .  
Perchance I saw her in long time gone by  
In that remembered other life I had.

## 154

FREE-THINKER! dost thou deem that only man  
Is sentient in a world where all is so ?  
Forces enslaved thy liberty bestow,  
Though thy vain mind the universe outspan.  
In beasts respect the soul thou mayst not scan,  
And flowers' that only Nature's self doth know;  
The throbs of love thro' veined metals flow;  
All's sentient, and hath power to bless or ban.

Beware the blind wall's sightless eye alert;  
Ev'n matter hath a speech translatable . . .  
See that thou move it not to thy soul's hurt!  
In lowliest lives a God doth often dwell;  
An unborn eye still sheathed, the stone's face  
Hides a pure soul beneath that grows apace.

## 155. EL DESDICHADO

I AM the dark inheritor of woe,  
The Prince of Aquitaine whose palace spire  
Lies low in dust. My star is dead. The wire  
Of my starr'd lute burns with an ebon glow.  
Into the grave's night send Pausilippo,  
Blue Latin seas; and let my soul respire  
The flower that won my weary heart's desire,  
The trellis where the rose and vine-leaf grow.

Am I Love or the Moon . . . ? Lusignan or Biron . . . ?  
My brow's still rosy with the Queen's hot kiss;  
I have swooned in sea-caves where the syren is . . .  
Twice have I overborne Hell's surge: I won  
The lyre of Orpheus to sad melodies  
Of saints, with fairies in loud antiphon.

## ALFRED DE MUSSET

(1810-1857)

## 156. BALLAD TO THE MOON

'T WAS a dusky night I spied,  
Hitched above the steeple high,  
The moon ride  
Like the dot above an "i."  
  
Moon what sombre ghost doth trail  
Thee in leash through the unknown  
Shadow pale,  
Face a-slant or fully shown ?

Art thou heaven's only eye  
    Whence a sneaking cherub peers,  
Us to spy  
    As from thy wan mask he leers ?

Art thou nothing but a bowl ?  
    Or a spider huge of girth  
That doth roll  
    Legless, armless, over earth ?

Art thou, as I half do dread,  
    That old clock that sounds the doom  
Of the dead  
    Damned to hell's eternal gloom ?

On thy speeding brow what toll,  
    This same night, of time is ta'en  
From the whole  
    Of their everlasting pain ?

Art thou nibbled by a worm  
    When thy disk grows black and dim,  
And thy form  
    Shrivels to a crescent slim ?

Who despoiled thee yesternight ?  
    Wert thou as a huge axe-blade  
Hidden bright  
    In some giant of the glade ?

For thou camest, chill and wan,  
    And they slender horn did spill  
On my pane  
    Light athwart the window-sill.

Go, O Moon, that ebbest slow,  
Fair-browed Phœbe's body fell  
Far below,  
Deep into the surgy swell.

Now no more than face hast thou,  
Wrinkled and long overworn;  
Even now  
Fades away thy brow forlorn.

The white huntress give us back  
In her stainless maidenhood,  
On the track-  
Of the drowsed deer in the wood.

O! beneath the hazel screen  
Underneath the budding plane,  
Dian Queen  
And her lusty hounds astrain!

Where the black kid halts in doubt  
High upon his rocky hill,  
Hearkening out  
How the sound drifts nearer still.

Following till the quarry's ta'en,  
Gully, sward, or field asway  
Gold with grain,  
Dian's hounds are sped away.

O eve when the winds arise,  
Phœbe, God Apollo's kin,  
Doth surprise  
By dim streams, a foot dipt in!

Phœbe who at close of day  
On the shepherd's lips doth sit  
Them to sway  
Like a light bird newly lit.

Moon, the mind will ever hold  
Of thy loves the lovely tale,  
As in gold  
Letters that can never pale.

And in youth that cannot die  
Blest for ever thou to him  
That goes by,  
Full of face or sickle-slim.

Thou hast love from shepherds old,  
Thou that alabaster-browed,  
Nigh the fold  
Setst the sheep-dogs baying loud.

Thou hast love from seamen hale  
Shut within high-built ships  
That do sail  
Under skies without eclipse.

And the girl thro' woodland ways  
Nimble-footed that doth fare,  
In thy praise  
Breathes her song upon the air.

Like a bear that drags its chains,  
Thy blue eyes behold below  
The loud main's  
Endless heaving to and fro.

Why, be winds or loud or dumb;  
Why, be skies or foul or fair,  
Hither come  
I this way to sit and stare ?

'Tis to see in dusk of night  
Hitched above the steeple high,  
The moon bright,  
Like the dot above an "i."

157. "PALE STAR OF EVENING . . ."

PALE star of evening, far herald wan,  
From thy blue palace thro' the sunset haze,  
Thy brow emerges on the boundless span  
Of heav'n. Where goes thy plainward gaze ?  
The storm has done and all the winds are stayed;  
The forest leaves drip downward on the heath;  
The golden moth skims lightly, odour-swayed,  
The meadows redolent beneath.  
What seekest thou on earth ? I see thee fare  
In shy flight downward on the sky-line rent  
By hill-tops, smiling melancholy where  
Thy wavering glance grows weary and nigh spent.

O star descending on the verdurous slope,  
Sad tear of silver on Night's robe of grey,  
Thou who afar dost watch the herdsman grope  
With sheep that follow on the darkened way—  
Whither away, O star, thro' night's vast zone ?  
Seekst thou a reed-bed on the stream to sleep ?  
Or wouldst thou fall in silence, lovely one,  
Like a thrown pearl into the waters deep ?

If thou must die, fair star, and if thy head  
Must plunge in ocean's vasty deep, O spare  
One moment ere thy lovely light be sped.  
O star of love, leave not the heavens bare!

## 158. SONG

BRAVE knight that to the war doth go  
What wilt thou do  
So far away ?  
Dost thou behold the starless gloom,  
How full of doom  
The world's highway ?

You that do deem a love that's left  
Will fade as swift  
From wounded thought,  
Ah! you that after glory lust  
Your fame to dust  
Is sooner brought.

Brave Knight that rideth to the fray,  
So far away  
What wilt thou dare ?  
I weep who smiled whenas I heard  
His lying word  
That spake me fair.

## 159. ON A DEAD GIRL

LOVELY she was, if so be Night  
That slumbers in the sombre shrine,  
There laid by sculptor Michael's might  
Unmoving in her marble line.

And she was kind, if it suffice  
To succour with unheeding face,  
And give unseen of God's wide eyes;  
If heartless gold have any grace.

She pondered, if the idle stir  
And gentle lilt of phrases low,  
As plaintive as a brook, aver  
That the shy brook doth ponder so.

She prayed, if two so lovely eyes  
From downward gaze and upward glance  
In flight from earth toward the skies,  
May earn the name of pray'r perchance.

She might have smiled, if flowers shy  
That yet within the bud are sealed,  
Might open when the wind goes by  
And leaves their longing all unhealed.

She might have wept, if her white hand  
That coldly o'er her heart is set  
Had ever human body spanned  
With dews of heavenly odour wet.

She might have loved, had pride allowed  
That ever kept its vigil vain,  
And like a lamp set by a shroud,  
Shone in her barren heart's domain.

The hue of seeming life she wore;  
And she has died by life unstirred.  
The book is fallen to the floor  
Whereof she never spelt a word.



## 160. THE MUSE'S WOOING

POET, take thy lute and kiss my mouth!  
The wild rose feels her tender buds grow ripe;  
Spring is born to-night, and winds fly south;  
Waiting for the dawn the throstles swing  
On the first green bushes burgeoning.  
Poet, kiss my mouth and tune thy pipe!

Poet, take thy lute! Night on the lawn  
Wafts the wind in odorous veils she slips;  
The virgin rose shuts jealously indrawn  
The pearly hornet dying in a swoon.  
Poet, take thy lute, and grant this boon—  
On my eager mouth to lay thy lips!

Poet, take thy lute! Youth's kindling wine  
Sweeps God's veins to-night in seething flood.  
I am troubled; joy oppresses; winds divine  
Set fire upon my lips from out the South.  
Poet, take thy lute and kiss my mouth;  
Quench my thirsty longing with thy wood!

## 161. CONSOLATION

WHY, O Dante, deemedst thou life's worst trial  
Glad reminders in days grown dark with grief?  
What deep wound could prompt thee to such denial  
Bitter of pain's relief?

Light still shineth; and wherefore in darkness lying  
Flout the solace of beams that did erstwhile shine?  
Soul of unmeasured sorrow for ever sighing,  
Say can this speech be thine?

By this torch that lights me with flame resplendent,  
Thine own heart this blasphemous speech belied.  
Bliss remembered is dearer and more transcendent  
Than ought on earth beside.

Nay! the forlorn that findeth a spark still glowing  
Under ashes that smother his miseries,  
He who seizes the ember and on it blowing  
Gazes with dazzled eyes;

He whose soul goes groping for bygone kisses,  
Who on the Past's flawed mirror his tears doth rain—  
Him thou deemedst a dupe, and his heart's fond blisses  
Intolerable pain!

On Francesca's lips, thine own angel of glory,  
Couldst thou utter so bitter a speech as this?  
She who left for a moment, to tell her story,  
Her everlasting kiss.

## 162. SORROW

STRENGTH and Life have fled afar,  
Friends are not, and Mirth is dead;  
Gone is pride that erstwhile fed  
Faith in my frail star.

Once I hailed a friend in Truth  
Ere I knew her changing guise;  
When the scales fell from mine eyes,  
Ah, the bitter ruth!

Everlasting is her pow'r,  
And all men that pass her by

Unperceiving, fruitlessly  
Live their little hour.

God doth speak and man that hears  
Needs must answer; all of good  
Life hath given me is the flood  
Eased my heart of tears.

163. FORTUNIO'S SONG

IF you think that I'll discover  
Her for whom my heart doth sue,  
Not for kingdoms could this lover  
Tell her name to you.

So it please you, pleasant fellow,  
I will sing an' you will pipe,  
She I love hath hair like yellow  
Corn when it is ripe.

Unto that her whim ordaineth  
Straight my willing heart defers.  
Doth she need my life, it waneth  
Gladly into hers.

Grief of love that's unrevealed,  
That none other answereth,  
In my wounded soul lies sealed  
Even unto death.

I'll not tell for whom I'm suing;  
Nay, I love my sweet too well,  
And I'll die for her I'm wooing  
Ere her name I tell.

## 164. SONG

WHEN men do find upon a day  
Hope fled away  
And joy grown ill,  
There's nought can soothe their misery  
As melody  
And beauty will.

Far more by lovely eyes are swayed  
Than by the blade  
Of arméd foe;  
And nought can bring the heart such ease  
As melodies  
Loved long ago.

## THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

(1811-1872)

## 165. TERZA RIMA

WHEN Michael Angelo left the Sistine dome,  
His frescoes done, sublime with radiant gaze  
To tread once more the wonted streets of Rome,

His arms and eyes to heaven he still did raise,  
His feet went stumbling on the road of clay,  
Who had forgotten earth in heaven's amaze.

While three long moons went round thus did he stay,  
As though he were an angel rapt before  
The golden triangle's mysterious sway.

Brother, behold why poets suffer sore,  
With feet that falter on the world's hard road:  
For ever on high heaven do they pore;

And angels, shaking their gold locks abroad,  
Lean over them with sheltering arms held wide  
And round mouths ready with a kiss from God.

They follow random ways with random stride,  
Bruised by the wheels or fellow farers' ire,  
Or fallen on pitfalls by them unespied.

What care they for the crowd, or stones, or mire?  
They seek by day the visions night doth bring,  
Their cheeks aflame with unappeased desire.

Of earthly cares they know no reckoning,  
And when in season due their shrine is made,  
Forth come they dazed from their dark covering.

The glory of their holy toil hath rayed  
Their forms and foreheads with its golden light;  
Their eyes do glow with heaven's own light displayed.

Night follows day, and day doth follow night,  
Ere yearning eyes, beseeching arms fall down;  
And long it is ere their feet fare aright.

Our palaces for them are all o'erthrown;  
Their souls for ever to their shrines fly back,  
And leave their bodies on our ways alone.

Our day to them seems than the night more black.  
Their eyes seek ever the blue sky divine,  
And the left fresco puts them on the rack.

Like Buonarotti, giant Lord of line,  
Their gaze goes ever to the heavenly vault,  
And marble roofs that nigh their foreheads shine.

O sublime blindness! O majestic fault!

## 166. BOAT SONG

TELL me, lovely girl,  
Whither would you go ?  
For the sails unfurl  
And the breezes blow!

I've an ivory scull,  
Streams of silken flags,  
Golden-ruddered hull  
Thro' the water drags;

And for ballast weight  
An orange round and light;  
And my little mate  
Is a seraph mite;

And the sail that swings  
Is together sewn  
From the down of wings  
Cherubim have known.

Tell me, lovely girl,  
Whither would you go ?  
For the sails unfurl  
And the breezes blow!

Would you to the North  
Where the Baltic raves  
Say, or would you forth  
Over tropic waves ?

Where the bergs are chill  
Pluck the flower of snow,  
Or where fierce suns spill  
Cull the flower below ?

Tell me, lovely girl,  
Whither would you go ?  
For the sails unfurl  
And the breezes blow!

\* \* \*

“ Drive for me your keel,—”  
So the girl did sigh—  
“ To the land o’ leal  
Where no love may die.”

“ That’s a coast, my dear,  
Not upon the chart  
Of the bays and drear  
Forelands of the heart.”

### 167. ART

ALL finest art is seen  
In forms that foil the blade  
Unkeen—  
Verse, marble, gem inlaid.

All idle bonds refuse!  
Yet, so thou move aright,

Bind, Muse,  
Thy limbs in buskins tight.

Spurn the too supple lilt  
That like an easy boot  
Is built  
For any random foot.

Thou sculptor, cast aside  
The clay thy hands alone  
Have plied,  
Thy spirit elsewhere flown.

Strive with the marble rough  
Hewn from Carraran steeps,—  
Such stuff  
The perfect contour keeps.

From Syracuse her bronze  
Take thou, thereon imprest  
The scone  
Of proud or yielding gest.

With deftest hand go trace  
Over the agate rare  
The face  
Apollo once did wear.

Painter, all tints refuse  
That fade; but pass thro' fire  
The hues  
So fixt to thy desire.

Call up the syrens blue  
With loopéd tails entwined



Ensue  
With beasts of mythic kind.

Above the world enthroned  
Christ and the Maid Divine;  
Each one  
Girt with the holy sign.

Though all things end in dust,  
Yet Art well-wrought lives on;  
The bust  
Outlasts the city gone.

The buried coin or ring  
Dug up by some poor hind,  
May bring  
An Emperor to mind;

And lines of perfect sound,  
Though Gods themselves may pass,  
Are found  
More durable than brass.

Hew down and chisel fine,  
So that thy dream be sealed  
For sign  
In stuff that will not yield!

#### 168. THE CLOUD

A CLOUD the far horizon scales  
And shapely on the sky-line sails,  
As though a naked girl rose slowly  
Out of a lake that no shadow veils

And upright in her shell of pearl  
She sails the blue, this pallid girl,  
Foam-frail, a later Aphrodite  
Born of the foam in the air a-swirl.

Behold the supple shining limb,  
And how she wavers in her whim,  
And how Dawn scatters roses, roses  
Over her satin shoulder slim.

## 169. SONG

THE butterflies that are the snow's own hue  
Flutter in swarms above the ocean spray.  
O butterflies, when shall I take with you  
The blue aërial way ?

And dost thou know, O fairest of the fair,  
My black-eyed maiden with the spinning feet,  
If they could lend me wings to cleave the air  
Whereto I straight should fleet ?

I should not kiss a single rose, but fly  
Straight over vale and forest to my goal  
Upon thy half-shut lips at last to die,  
O blossom of my soul!



## BOOK V

TO  
THE SHADE OF ANDREW LANG

DEAR Andrew whom I never met,  
Still o'er the years your version mellow  
Shows "Aucassin and Nicolette"  
In English verses without fellow.  
Your Songs and Ballads of Old France  
Are sweetly sung ; and on your anvil  
You struck out sparks that still enhance  
The fame of Murger and De Banville.

Though here the jealous eye may find  
Some few of those yourself did render,  
Think not, my master, I am blind  
To what in you is blithe and tender.  
But he who in his book is bid  
To show the Gallic Muse completely,  
Must give again what others did  
Although he give them far less sweetly.

And therefore, while your robes I don,  
I set you here among my Lares  
Without your leave, since you are gone  
To haunt the land of myths and fairies  
And may your sprite upon the sill  
Be pledge of all that's sweet and sunny,  
Although I ply a wanton quill  
And oft-times render gall for honey.

## VICTOR DE LAPRADE

(1812--1883)

### 170. THE SUMMITS

I WILL go and drink the waters pure that feed the  
rolling river;  
I will tread the frozen azure of the glacier under  
heel;  
I will bathe my body in the waves of new-born winds  
that shiver;  
The surging flood of thrilling air shall temper me  
like steel.

Let me slumber on the mountain-top that I have  
toiled in winning,  
And, thrust in the eternal snow, my hands be  
purified;  
There, in that air, life's currents have their impulse  
and beginning,  
Ah! let me hence and breathe full deep of that  
unsullied tide.

Then up! the moaning wind wanes out beneath the  
giant boulder,  
Doubt cannot soar so high aloof as that chill height  
I seek;  
Then up! with calm and silence swathing brow, and  
breast and shoulder,  
Within that rocky steadfastness God's solemn voice  
shall speak.



## JOSEPHIN SOULARY

(1815-1891)

## 172. THE TWO ROSES

YESTREEN beneath the greenery  
I found young Rose in tears that shed  
Over a little rose's bed  
That was less rosy far than she.  
"Dear heart, what can your trouble be?"  
I asked the little golden-head.  
And she replied, "Ah, sir, if said  
It's secret between you and me!"

"As I was passing by, a rose—  
This same whereon my tears down pour—  
Told me this truth in shy soft words,  
*A bud once blown can never close.*  
And my fond heart's wide open for  
The farmer's boy that drives the herds."

## 173. VAIN DREAMS

HAD I but an acre of loam on hill or valley,  
Fed by a stream that fell or loitered by,  
There I'd plant an ash-tree, a thorn-bush or a willow,  
There I'd build a low roof between me and the sky.  
On my tree a soft nest, feather-lined or woolly,  
There should hold a singing-bird—sparrow, finch  
or merle,  
Underneath my own roof, a bairnie in the cradle  
Garlanding the pillow with her brown or yellow  
curl.



All I want's an acre; and so to measure rightly,  
I would take the lassie bonniest to me;  
"Stand thou uprightly"—so should be my bidding—  
"Front the rising sunbeam." So, surely should I  
see.  
"Far as thy shade on the grassy levels printed,  
Just so far my faring, no farther than the shade's"—  
All the lure of bliss that's far beyond fulfilment  
Holds no more for me than a fickle dream that  
fades.

## 174. THE SCARECROW

UNDER her tilted hat of Tuscan rushes  
The brown birds at her coming swept to raid  
The ripe fruit in her open palm displayed,  
That she had gathered from the berry bushes.  
Never more loyal court, more queenly blushes,  
A queen more kind or starvelings less afraid.  
Vainly the grudging gardener erst forbade  
This foolish feeding of her wastrel thrushes.

The child is dead. The churlish gardener lays  
Her old straw hat upon the loaded sprays,  
Thinking these greedy plunderers thus to scare.  
Vain ruse! Reminded of her gentle heed,  
A thousand fledgelings to their sister speed,  
And evening finds the bushes all stript bare.

## LECONTE DE LISLE

(1818-1894)

## 175. THE RAVINE OF SAINT-GILLES

THE gorge is dark below the reeds' massed slimness  
Where thro' the sun at noonday may not pierce;  
And hidden springs slow-thridding thro' the dimness  
Are merged in silence of the solstice fierce.

From the hard lava with mossed fissures pouring  
Over the lichens there is water shed  
And lost; from hidden tunnels of its boring  
It springs again along its gravel bed.

There smooth and sullen a dark bluish well is,  
While all along are heavy boulders bound  
With rosy-belled lianes as on a trellis  
Above the velvet plots of grassy ground.

The brink is fledged with cacti, and far flowing,  
The bent-grass waves its filmy flowers near,  
Where stalks the red-plumed cardinal whose going  
Fills the soft-nested colibris with fear.

Kingfishers and green parakeets unstirring  
From the high peaks gaze down on the still well;  
And round the black hives in a sunbeam whirring,  
A golden swarm of bees is audible.

Puffing a warm breath o'er the bushes mazy,  
Stockstill amid the weed-entrammelled path,  
Huge oxen sniff the air that wanders hazy  
Clean from the running rills as from a bath;

And on their peaceful flanks, their shoulders bossy,  
A myriad butterflies with gaudy wings,  
A myriad grasshoppers deride the glossy  
Slow swishing of the velvet tail that swings.

On the rock slope flame-filled as a live cinder  
The supple lizard, basking in his sloth,  
Simmers as though his emerald length were tinder  
That thrilled to the sun's kisses nothing loth.

O'er mossy hollows where the quails are resting  
In leafy shelter from the jungle heat,  
With eyes half-closed the amorous cats go questing,  
Smooth gliding by on velvet paws discreet.

Black on a boulder, a red loin-cloth wearing,  
A native herdsman careless of his kine,  
Hums a Saklavan melody, and, staring,  
Dreams of the isle beyond the blue sea-line.

Thus on the yawning brink all things that tingle  
With life thro' frond or fibre, plume or pelt,  
Now shine, and dream, and chant in purpose single;  
Yet, in a twinkling, into stillness melt.

Thro' the deep pit now silence walks with darkness,  
Since, with a roaring sound the mountain steep  
Hurled from the waves its sulphurous mass, in stark-  
To harden in impenetrable sleep. [ness

A patch of sky above the branches curving  
Shows in a sparkle on the air up-buoyed  
A flock to Ceylon or Rodrigué swerving  
Like flakes of snow astray on the blue void.

Save for this peep-hole on the water flashing,  
In the still night the ravine sinks to sleep;  
And even a splintered boulder downward crashing  
Sends up no echo of its dreadful leap.

He who hath probed thy ways, O Nature, proveth  
Illusion binds thee, and thy face belies:  
Whether in wrath or gladness thy strength moveth,  
Or rage or rapture thy cold heart denies.

Happy the man whose heart is his own shelter,  
Self-sealed, from grief or mirth or any hate,  
Unstirred by rumours of the world's vain welter,  
A gulf of silence still inviolate.

In vain life stirs about him; as one hallowed,  
He dwells in his own heart as in a shrine;  
In its unechoing darkness all is swallowed,  
And nothing shines there, save one flame divine.

But this sole spark within its shadow hidden  
Is the lost beam from spaces unbeheld;  
It calls him hence to realms by life forbidden,  
And lights in him the Eternal hope unquelled!

#### 176. HIALMAR'S HEART

A CLEAR night, icy wind, and blood-streams staining  
The snow where tombless lie a thousand dead,  
With sword still gript and eyes aghast. Complaining  
The ravens wheel above them still unfed.

The light pours wanly from the moon's chill'd embers.  
Forth from the bloody heap Hialmar lifts

On his snapt sword himself whose corse dismembers,  
The blood of battle raining from its rifts.

“Ho there! Lives there one lad in whom still speech  
Of all the lusty throng that dawn heard sing [is  
Full-throated as the thrush when he beseeches  
Behind the thick-set bushes in the spring?

“All, all are dumb. My helm is slit, mine armour  
Is riddled thro’ and cloven in the fray,  
Mine eyes weep blood. I hear a swollen clamour  
Like foiled sea-breakers or loud wolves that bay.

“Come hither, old man-eater round me gliding,  
Rive thro’ my bosom with thy beak of steel—  
The morn shall find us stark and still abiding—  
Bear thou my warm heart to the girl that’s leal.

“To far Upsala where the Jarls together,     `  
With song and golden flagons hold carouse  
Bear thou my heart, old rover of the heather,  
To Ylmer’s daughter who hath heard its vows.

“There shalt thou find her standing pale, uprightly  
Aloft the tower where the daws wheel by,  
And in her ears two silver rings hung lightly,  
And her eyes brighter than a clear-starred sky.

“Tell her the love I bear her, dusky raven;  
Lay down thy trophy whole and red of hue;  
She’ll know it well, the unblanching, the uncraven,  
And Ylmer’s daughter she shall smile on you.

"I die. From twenty wounds ebbs out my spirit.  
Come wolves and drink my blood! My life is done.  
Young, brave, unshamed, I shall soon inherit  
My seat where the high Gods are in the sun."

## 177. THE SPRING

A SPRING up-sparkles in the silent forest,  
Far hid from blazing noon.  
There rushes quiver, and fain of its cool boon,  
Bluebells and violets hover.

Not goats that crop the bitter-bladed grasses  
On hilly slopes hard by,  
Nor shepherds with their flute's suave melody,  
Have sullied that clear fountain.

The tall black oaks by all the bees beloved,  
Throw peaceful curtains wide  
Wherein the wild doves lurk or, drowsy, hide  
Their heads beneath their feathers.

The dawdling stags beside the mossy thickets  
Draw in the unhastened dew;  
Under green canopies the light drips through,  
The lazy sylvans slumber.

And the wan Naiad of the sacred fountain  
Lets fall her lids awhile,  
Dreaming, half-drowséd; and a happy smile  
Flits round her mouth's red flower.

No yearning eye, love-lit, hath seen that body  
Beneath its limpid veil

All snowy white, with long locks liquid-frail,  
Asleep on the sand's silver.

And none hath seen that cheek of maiden softness,  
The ivory neck, the line  
Of that young bosom or the shoulder fine,  
White arms and lips unsullied.

But the lewd faun, alert on the near branches,  
Spies through the leafy net  
Her supple body with spilt kisses wet,  
Beneath the water shining.

Thereon he laughs with strident joy inhuman  
That thrills the arbour cool;  
And the maid startled, pallid o'er her pool,  
Wanes out like a blown shadow.

Ev'n as the Naiad in the distant woodland  
Asleep beneath the tide,  
Fly from the impious hand and eye, and hide  
Light of the soul, O Beauty!

#### 178. NIGHT

THE spent winds on the mountain slopes at peace  
To sleep the swaying branches slowly woo;  
The still birds drowse in dew; the foaming fleece  
Is gold with star-beams on the waters blue.

Soft mist hides all the mountain tracks and swathes  
The plunging gullies and the peaks that soar;  
The sad moon in her light the foliage bathes  
And sounds of human-kind are heard no more.

But on the pebbles sings the unsullied surge,  
The deep voice of the forest doth intone;  
The thrilled air bears sea-song and forest-dirge  
Up to the night upon her star-lit throne.

Mount upward holy murmur, divine speech,  
Be Earth's low tidings unto Heav'n upborne,  
And ask the serene stars if we may reach  
Their thrones by an eternal pathway worn.

Earth's holy orison of wood and wave  
Thou hast consoled me in dark days of yore;  
Me from my barren sorrow thou didst save  
And in my heart thou singest evermore!

## 179. TRE FILA D'ORO

YONDER o'er the sea like a swallow hasting over,  
Fain would I fly till I reached the shore beyond!  
Vainly I long who am held a captive lover;  
With three strands of golden thread she hath my  
heart in bond.

One is her glance, and one her smile compelling,  
One is her lip like a flower nigh to fall;  
Nay, but I love too well, and suffer beyond telling;  
With three strands of golden thread she hath my  
heart in thrall.

Ah! If I might break the so stubborn knots that  
bind me,  
Bid farewell to weeping and to pain, a truant flown!  
But ah! No! No! Better death in anguish find me,  
Than rend you asunder golden threads that she  
hath sewn!





And on the blackness of her velvet robing  
Gleam blood-stains of her prey.

She drags its mangled remnant, torn asunder  
From a slain stag, whereon to-night she'll feed,  
And the frayed haunches of her dreadful plunder  
Drip blood on moss and weed.

Round her the butterflies and wild bees muster,  
Skimming her supple sinews as they fleet;  
A myriad bushes where sweet blossoms cluster  
Throw perfume at her feet.

The python from a scarlet cactus peering  
Unwinds his coil, and with a curious eye  
Beholds, above the bush his flat head rearing,  
Her stealthy form go by.

She glides beneath tall fern-trees, sinking noiseless  
Behind mossed boles; the blazing air the while  
Struck dumb in the vast light above, grows voiceless  
Beneath the forest aisle.

#### 181. THE SHOWMEN

LIKE to a dismal brute, dust-smothered, teased,  
That tugs its chain and bays the blistering sky,  
Trail thy torn heart who will in the foul sty  
That so the lewd, flesh-ravening mob be pleased;  
Let Love's own veil of glorious light be seized  
And torn from shuddering limbs divinely shy,  
That so the fire rekindle its dull eye,  
Its mirth and boorish pity be appeased!

Though proud and silent graveward I go hence,  
I'd rather plunge to endless darkness down  
Than sell my heart-throbs for the rabble's roar;  
I would not give my body like a clown  
To tumble on its paltry board for pence,  
Nor leer for lovers like a shameless whore.

182. AFTER A THOUSAND YEARS

THAT night the loud voice of the sea was roaring  
Wroth in the darkened gullies' rocky cup,  
And, all dishevelled, clouds of mist were pouring  
Where round the headlands the whipt spume rose  
up.

The howling wind smote all the shades asunder  
And tore them on the cliff-tops; savagely  
With bellowing fury as of taurine thunder  
It drove the herded breakers of the sea.

Like an enormous monster, frenzy-driven,  
With bristling hide and mouth afoam with wrath,  
The mountain rearing in the embattled heaven  
Moaned dreadfully, its loins white with froth.

Rapt by the desperate cries, I heard more loudly,  
O Vision, O Desire, O Life new-born!  
In the wild air your holy songs that proudly  
Called to me like the trumpeters of morn.

And forth from the infernal cavern reeking  
My soul escaped from darkness and dire drouth,  
Into the feverish air of life, still seeking  
For Glory's laurel and for Beauty's mouth.

And thus the dreadful night's loud voice spake to me:  
"Lo! Life is sweet. Burst thou thy sepulchre!"  
And the mad wind with its wild notes and gloomy:  
"Let Beauty draw thy being into her!"

And I who seek this boon of hours appalling  
After a buried century of decades,  
Hear nothing but these savage tears down falling,  
The muffled onset of embattled shades.

### 183. THE LION'S DEATH

A HUNTER old whom once the desert air  
And bulls' blood pricked to hunger, then he scann'd  
The sea beyond him and the lonely sand  
With sullen roaring from his rocky lair.  
Then like a damned soul in dire Hell's despair  
For the lewd pleasure of a gaping band,  
He came and went within a cage, his grand  
Rude head wall-thwarted in his pacing there.

Such being his vile doom perpetual  
All meat and drink the savage beast put by  
Till his wild soul in death o'er-leapt the wall.  
O rebel to the world's captivity,  
Weak heart still caged, why wilt thou too not die  
And like the lion make an end of all?

### 184. A FESTIVAL

NOR bloody altar, nor barbaric rite  
With tresses in a wreath of flowers bound,  
A fair-hued maid of Ionie moves round



Her golden tresses on the sea a-swim  
Are not in garland or in fillet bound;  
Her body shines like some pale lily slim  
Amid the violets found.

She laughs and gambols, and the dolphins gay  
The godlike radiance of her gaze to win,  
Stir up the surge upon her watery way  
With thrust of tail and fin.

#### 186. THE SUPREME CONSUMMATION

NAY, but the world is old, nigh old as hell;  
Since first man wept, since first desire o'ercame  
With fire more fierce and bitterer than hell's flame,  
The tale of time is grown too long to tell.  
'Tis life is ill and dying that is well,  
Whether wrist-bound the sea our body claim,  
Or with clear eyes on heaven we fall full game  
To stroke of sword or to the bursting shell.

Thou hast my love, O heart whom Earth so craves,  
O burning might that bears the martyr out  
Whose soul in passing grows in strength serene!  
O splendid blood, come shrive me in thy waves,  
So may I, while the vulgar rabble shout,  
Pass to my endless home with spirit clean!

#### 187. NOON

NOON whose kingdom summer is, spread wide along  
the plain's expanse,  
Falls down to earth in swathes of silver from his  
throne in heaven's blue.

All is silent. Air's aflame and burns as in a breath-  
less trance;  
Earth lies drowsed beyond awaking in her robe of  
fiery hue.

Far, in farness beyond span, stretch meadows where  
no shadow shows,  
The stream where once the cattle watered now hath  
no more draught to bring.  
Far away the forest slumbers deep amid the darkling  
boughs  
Yonder on the still horizon where they stand  
unquivering.

All alone the tall wheat-ears wave to and fro their  
ripened grain,  
As though a tide of golden waters, heedless of the  
drowsy call.  
Sacred Earth's most careless brood with fearless lips  
that seek and drain  
To the lees the brimming chalice that the sun holds  
out to all.

Now and then, as though a sigh from out their  
burning souls impels,  
The bosom of the heavy wheat-ears lifts a mur-  
murous sound, a-sway  
With a slow majestic motion of the golden tide that  
swells  
Till it touch the dim horizon where in haze it dies  
away.

Nearer, mid the grasses prone lie oxen white whose  
dew-laps are  
Slow-dribbling downward, while inert with dullard  
gaze from languid eyes

Shining brightly, they pursue across the level fields  
a far  
Inner thought whereof the still unseizéd phantom  
ever flies.

Get thee hence! O fellow man, avoid at noon these  
shining fields!  
Or grief or gladness in thy bosom, fly! for nought  
is here for thee.  
Nature is an empty thing and nought to any man  
she yields:  
Only here the sun consumes; nought lives or sad  
or joyously.

But if sick of sorry laughter and the bitter sound of  
woe,  
Or eager to forget the world and from its fret a  
way to win,  
Wrath or pity left behind thee, thou the uttermost  
wouldst know  
Of sup̄remest exhaltation, Come! and steep thy  
soul herein.

Here the sun shall speak unto thee words of a sub-  
limer sense;  
In ardour of its quenchless flame yield up thy  
selfish being's dross,  
With slow feet returning then to sinful cities far from  
hence,  
Seven times thy heart made stronger in the furnace  
of thy loss.





Over her mighty shape to roam at ease,  
Crawl on the slope of her enormous knees;  
Or when the sultry heat of summer drove  
My mistress prone athwart the grassy space,  
Drowsed in the shadow of her breasts, not move  
Like a still hamlet at a mountain's base.

## 190. TWILIT HARMONY

BEHOLD the hour is come when stems are thrilled,  
And like swung censers flowers shed their fume;  
Now thro' the air are sounds and odours spilled;  
O wistful waltz within the dizzy gloom!

Now like swung censers flowers shed their fume;  
Now like a torn heart hath the viol trilled;  
O wistful waltz within the dizzy gloom!  
Like a lone shrine the sky with sorrow is filled.

Now like a torn heart hath the viol trilled,  
A shy heart that doth hate all dark and doom!  
Like a lone shrine the sky with sorrow is filled.  
The sun is drownéd in his blood's own spume.

A shy heart that doth hate all dark and doom  
Drinks every drop from the waned light down-  
spilled.

The sun is drownéd in his blood's own spume.  
Thy memory lights me like a monstrance filled!

## 191. MY FORMER LIFE

UNDER vast colonnades that took the noon's  
Sea-mirrored fire, I dwelt. In eve's dim light  
The pillars showed majestic and upright  
Like basalt caves wherein the wroth sea swoons;

The surge that mocked the sun's face and the moon's,  
Merged as in solemn and most mystic rite  
The hues of sunset waning on my sight  
With mighty concord of immortal tunes.

I drank voluptuous calm amid the sheen  
Of sea and sky and mirrored light serene;  
Where naked slaves with bodies steeped in balms,  
Eager to soothe the sorrow undivined  
Whereof I grew most weary, fanned the wind  
Athwart my brow with wafture of green palms.

#### 192. THE PIT

GREAT Pascal had his pit always in sight.  
All is abysmal—deed, desire, or dream  
Or speech! Full often over me doth scream  
The wind of Fear and blows my hair upright.  
By the lone strand, thro' silence, depth and height,  
And shoreless space that doth with terrors teem . .  
On my black nights God's finger like a beam  
Traces his swarming torments infinite.

Sleep is a monstrous hole that I do dread,  
Full of vague horror, leading none knows where;  
All windows open on infinity,  
So that my dizzy spirit in despair  
Longs for the torpor of the unfeeling dead.  
Ah! from Time's menace never to win free!

## 193. HYMN

TO her the dearest, the most fair  
That fills my heart with light sublime,  
The seraph of immortal pray'r,  
Salute throughout immortal time!

She fills my life as from the south  
A salt air that the sea-wind brings,  
And soothes my never quenched drouth  
With savour of eternal springs.

A redolence that sweetens all  
The air in some most dear demesne,  
A censer that some hand lets fall  
To smoulder in the dark unseen.

O how, unsullied love, to tell  
With any truth the thing thou art?  
A grain of musk that still doth dwell  
Deep-hid in my unaging heart?

To her the dearest, the most fair  
That brings me joy and all my pow'rs,  
The seraph of immortal pray'r,  
Salute throughout immortal hours!

## 194. EXOTIC PERFUME

WHEN with shut eyes in autumn twilight dim  
I breathe thy warm breast's odour, then I see  
That happy shore where everlastingly  
The sun smites downward from his burning rim;

An idle land where Nature in her whim  
Breeds many a strange and sweetly burdened tree;  
Where women gaze from candid eyes and free,  
And the nude men are sinewy and slim.

Thine odour bears me to that blessed zone:  
Yonder the limp sails to the yard-arms cling,  
Still weary with their long sea-voyaging;  
The perfume of green tamarinds is blown  
About my nostrils, and to me grows one  
With voices of the sailors as they sing.

#### 195. THE DEAD MISTRESS

WHEN, O my dark beloved, thou shalt drowse  
Beneath black marble, and thy bed-chamber  
Shall be deep-delved and thy pleasure-house  
Some sodden cavern whence thou mayst not stir;  
When thy head-stone shall so with weight oppress  
Thy breast and supple thighs that it shall stay  
Thy heart from beating and thy foot no less  
From hasting down the old adventurous way,—  
The grave that knows my inmost heart's desire  
Shall thus, night-long, my deathless wish repeat:  
"Thou who of thy sweet self didst baulk the buyer,  
How should I spare thee now, adulterous cheat,  
From Death's indignity?" Then woman, wail!  
The worm shall suck thy burning body pale.

#### 196. SIN

FOR me the most foul demon still doth plot;  
About me like the imponderable air  
He flows. I drink him, and straightway am hot  
With shameful lusts the tongue may not declare.

And since he knows how I love form, he wins  
 My soul in woman's guise, or else he'll tell  
 Some pious tale of washing out my sins  
 To tempt me to a draught that's brewed in Hell.  
 He leads me far away from God's clear eyes,  
 Halt and most sore still am I onward lured  
 To endless plains of speechless miseries,  
 Whereon unto my weary eyes and blurred  
 He shows red scars, foul raiment, and the shape  
 Of gory Ruin with her wounds a-gape.

## 197. SELF-COMMUNING

BE wise, my sorrow, quit thy vain unrest.  
 Now falls the twilight of thine eager plea;  
 The dim haze wraps the city vaporously  
 In peace or leaves long weariness unblest.  
 Now doth the soulless rabble, lust-possessed,  
 Beneath the unsparing goad of Pleasure flee  
 To reap remorse in foul satiety.  
 Come, O my sorrow, on serener quest.  
 Behold the lost years of thy life that lean  
 From heaven's high balcony in garments mean;  
 Behold Regret from the deep waters rise.  
 While the dim sun drifts downward to his bed,  
 Harken how eastward with unechoing tread  
 The soft Night draws her long shroud down the  
 skies.

## 198. DEATH

HAUL up the anchor, captain old, O Death, for it is  
 time;  
 We weary of the listless shore. Cast off, and so  
 to sea!



Have you forgotten, dear Christine,  
That tiny room once redolent,  
My own sky-scraping chamber mean,  
The soft May nights so blithely spent ?  
Those starry nights when stars would say  
" As we do, drop thy veils, O Sweet!  
And let thy lover have his way " . . .  
Say, do you still remember it ?

Louise is dead, and Marie goes  
By sad ways downward to the mire;  
Pale Christine like a flower reblows  
Far off to suns of southern fire.  
Louise and Marie and Christine,  
For me are all three turned to clay,  
Our love is dust, and I with teen  
Alone recall that happier day.

LOUIS B'OUILHET

(1822-1869)

## 200. SPRING

RISE from your bed for the Spring is born this  
morning;  
Yonder in the dell a rosy veil's adrift;  
All the garden thrills and sings; the sun upon your  
window  
Dazzles like a laughing face when eyelids lift.

Yonder on the trellis arch the crimson roses cluster,  
Making heaven redolent with soft, sweet breath ;  
All alone the vine is bare, and mid the bursting flowers  
Creeps along the ancient wall, a snake in death.





The Gods alone know if man's soul survives:  
But steadfast is the labour of just lives,  
Be they no more than day-long. With calm breath  
They leave appraisal to the appointed judge  
Who for the right meet Death, and nothing grudge  
In envy of the Gods that know not death.

## THEODORE DE BANVILLE

(1823-1891)

### 202. BALLADE-OF THE FOREST HAUNTERS

STILL do they sing, the swarm of mocking fays  
Well sheltered by the thorn and holly-leaves,  
Who feel the light winds' tender, frolic ways;  
And Dian still the lean wolf-pack bereaves  
Of all its courage—she whose cunning weaves  
A bower to hide her heart in. Many a hind  
Still worships her. And when the moon doth blind  
In her white splendour poured from a clear sky,  
With lovely locks adrift in the still wind,  
Fair Dian thro' the forest fareth by.

The water-lilies and the crisped bays,  
The chilly elf, the soft-eyed sprite that grieves,  
Spin round the red dwarf in a mystic maze,  
Linked hand in hand beneath the nodding leaves.  
And green sylphs play the mummer, till upheaves  
A tall form on the darkness half divined;  
Whereon is heard long sobbing on the wind,  
A sigh of grief for all things gone awry,  
And dumb feet tear the ivy-stems that bind:  
Fair Dian thro' the forest fareth by.

Prince, it is time we left the dust behind,  
And stony ways whereon the hard wheels grind.  
In forest arbours far from human eye,  
The city of our questing we may find  
Where Dian thro' the forest fareth by.

Cottage white whereon the vine  
Long of stem and serpentine  
Drank the dew-drops with its leaves  
From the eaves!

Crystal stream that once did roll  
Shadowed by the upright bole  
Of a hollow walnut-tree  
Steadfastly!

Chilly streams and freshets who  
Feeling for the griefs I knew,  
Trembled in the time gone by  
At my cry!

Pool where washerwomen were  
Full of song and void of care  
Beating on the board with might  
Linen white!

Centenarian elder-tree  
Whose hoar forehead I did see,  
Thunder-stricken thrice and yet  
Firmly set!

Arbours cool and copses wild  
In the grassy sward enisled,  
Where to every wind that played  
Poplars swayed!

Heavy purple grapes that hung  
On the hillside vines and clung  
To the laden stems that went  
Earthward bent;

Where when autumn-time came in  
In her merriment would spin  
Round the press the vintage-sprite  
At twilight!

Briars whose ruddy fruit doth bleed,  
In the ravines thrown for seed,  
As of oaks the acorns are  
Sown afar!

Osier-stems whose murmurs light  
Fill the ring-dove with affright,  
Willow blue, the far away's  
Sunset blaze!

Boughs with ruddy cherries bent,  
Reaping girls surprised that went  
Wading where the waters fleet  
With bare feet!

Leafy arbours, rills, and lanes;  
Smell of leaves and grasses; plains,  
Shades, and rocks that often drew  
Me to you!

Rivers! forests! silence stilled!  
O what joys my childhood filled!  
My fond soul to you doth feel  
Far less leal

Than to this poor joyless plot  
Where green leaf and rose are not,  
And the antique yew-trees raise  
Sombre sprays,

To this sandy path that is  
Dearer for the untold bliss  
Of the hour when first I heard  
Her soft word!

Where my love, with musing mind  
Gently her sweet self resigned,  
Leaning on my arm, and so  
Speaking low,

Thoughts adrift, the while she tore  
Leaf by leaf the flower she bore  
With a heedless hand that left  
All bereft,

At the hour when from the brink  
Trembling stars emerge, and link  
On the sky that shines or low'rs  
Silver flow'rs.

#### 204. TO THEOPHILE GAUTIER

THE poet snares his prize  
• As in a fowler's noose,  
• Then plies  
    The chisel gravers use.

For, that his blade may wreak  
On metal of hard core  
His freak,  
    Deep must he carve and bore.

Hard is the task! You hold  
    As I, the Muse must find  
The old  
    Strict bondage to her mind;

That, shining, firm, the flow  
    Of lovely line hard-wrought

Doth show  
Smooth-browed the labouring thought.

For you who do bestride  
Exalted, the wild horse  
Soft-eyed  
That down the skies doth course;

O! you who have the sleight  
To snare in net of words  
Your bright  
Dream-pinions like a bird's;

Master who mak'st us fain  
Of the green laurel, still  
You deign  
To ply the tool with skill.

205. "WE'LL GO NO MORE THE WOODLAND  
WAY . . ."

WE'LL go no more the woodland way, the laurel-  
leaves are clipt,

The little cupids in the pool, the naiads on the sill  
Behold again the sunlit wave where beam and shadow  
dipt

On waters poured from cups they held, now silent  
grown and still.

The laurel-leaves are clipt, and the weary stag at bay  
Now trembles at the sounding horn; we'll go no more  
astray

Where troops of lovely children once went fro-  
licking their fill  
Beneath the glance of lilies dewy-eyed and dewy-lipt.

Behold the scythe that shears the grass, the shattered leaves that spill!  
We'll go no more the woodland way, the laurel-leaves are clipt.

## EUGÈNE MANUEL

(1823-1901)

### 206. THE CRADLE

FOR nine long months she made her mother's vows  
To lay her God-sent baby in a shrine  
Most fit to hold him; it must far outshine  
The cot wherein the sons of kings may drowse.  
Out on your simple deal, your supple boughs!  
The artist drew the cot of her design:  
It must be pearl let into rosewood fine,  
Though gold indeed were proper for his house.

Nought seems too costly, linen or fine lace  
To swathe with whiteness the soft baby face  
Upon the pillow on his birthday morn.  
Now is he come, her little son, her pride!  
And lo! the cradle he must sleep inside  
Is made of oak, and to God's acre borne.

## ANDRÉ THEURIET

(1833-1907)

### 207. THE VINE IN BLOSSOM

ALONG the vines the blossoms thrive,  
To-night just twenty years are mine.  
Ah! but it's good to be alive



And feel the veins that seethe and strive  
Like the crushed grape that turns to wine.

My brain's with idle thoughts abrim;  
I wander in a tipsy swoon;  
I run and drink the air I skim . . .  
Is it the draught that pricks my whim,  
Or blossom on the vine-festoon?

But ah! what odour freights the air  
From out the clusters of the vine . . .  
Ah! had I but the heart to dare  
Clasp something . . . some one . . . anywhere  
Within these wanton arms of mine!

I fleet, as fearful as a fawn,  
Beneath the loaded trellises;  
I lay me amid blade and awn,  
And on the bramble-shaded lawn  
I taste the wild red raspberries.

And to my lips that pant in drouth  
It seems as though a kiss were blown  
On breezes from the tender south;  
As though a soft and scented mouth  
Moved down to mingle with my own.

O strange delight, O stranger dearth!  
O! tendrils of the vine about,  
O! blossoms trailing in your mirth,  
Is Love still roaming on the earth,  
And how may lovers find him out?

## ARMAND SILVESTRE

(1837-1901)

## 208. THE VENUS OF MILO

NO live girl's body hath such pride impassioned;  
Such beauty is beyond Earth's brittle clay.  
From the hard marble was her statue fashioned  
In lands where once of old the Gods held sway.

No cruel soul that ever foils love's hoping,  
Could hide behind that bosom and that brow;  
And those twin summits from her torso sloping  
Could sheathe no heart was traitor to its vow.

Like a steep rock her throat leans heavenward, yearn-  
For pure betrothal with diviner life; [ing  
And thwarts the tide of passion in us, spurning  
The soiled caresses of our souls at strife.

O Rock upright amid our dust and ashes!  
O lantern rising on our bitter strand!  
O statue whence the antique thought still flashes  
Above us like a tempest-fluttered brand!

O wardress of the sacred stairway spiring  
To perfect beauty on the heights afar,  
Where we behold with dread our soul's desiring;  
O he who did thy marble body mar

Struck deep the poet! For thine arms in breaking,  
Daughter of Gods, O deathless Beauty, bare  
The souls of all men downward, heav'n forsaking,  
Into the squalid vortex of despair.

## 209. IMMORTALITY

WHERE goes the starry quire ?  
Whereto our hearts aspire  
    To hail the eternal light.  
Our soul to theirs uplift  
That golden-wingéd drift  
    Athwart the solemn night.

Shade on that span immense  
But wardens light intense  
    From gates that Death throws wide.  
Shade is but the dark way  
That leads from yesterday  
    To morrows glorified.

Pursue the sacred stars  
That mount beyond the bars  
    Of day in linkéd light.  
As they to Death we steer,  
As they we wane when near  
    The day that hath no night.

## 210. PROMETHEUS

HIS galled flesh writhing on the rock, he thrilled  
With endless lamentation the lone sky.

“Consort most foul whose carrion food am I,  
Bear off my heart and let thy brood be filled.  
From my red wound not all the blood is spilled.

There mayst thou glut. Thy gorged beak cannot  
My spirit with the supreme agony, [try  
Live tomb most avid of my flesh unkilld!

Most mournful ravener, let thy beak not halt  
But rive my entrails with a ruthless edge:  
Not direst torture of thy claws can mate  
The torment of the mocking azure vault,  
The stars that laugh on an unreachéd ledge,  
The calmness of the heaven that I hate!"

**LÉON DIERX**

(1838-1912)

## 211. OCTOBER EVENING

**A TREMOR slides from the hill-slopes down to the plains;**

From the hill-slopes and from the woods, in the  
plain and the croft

A tremor of night passes on to the country lanes.

—O! the Angelus bell in the sunset chiming aloft!—

Under a chilly gust the songs grow soft,  
 Afar the sound of singing and laughter dies

In the dense mist rising up as a breath upcurls,

A slow breath scattering far its last fond sighs,

Its farewell sighs where the dark wood shakes  
in dread,—

It shakes in dread, and the dry leaf eddyings whirls,

**Whirls and falls on paths that no feet tread.**

212. WINTER DAY

**THIS** morning not one beam cleaves the cloud-blind,

The laggard sun upsurges with sealed eye,

And mine own gaze is dull with apathy;

With the dim hour, O Soul, content thy mind!

Dead stars fade out like sparks upon the wind  
Blown from the smithy, and night's blossoms die;  
I sink in mine own sorrow utterly;  
Come, ponder, O Soul, the dark hours left behind!

Night's angels now draw down their sombre pall;  
They will not hang their lanterns on the steep.  
Think of the tearless crowds that deathward creep,  
Of shrines where now no human footsteps fall!  
Thou art but a grave, O Soul, a dusty heap;  
Then ponder on sleep and dark funereal!

## ACHILLE MILLIEN

(1838- )

### 213. THE THREE SISTERS

AS daylight passes there go three lasses  
Hand holding hand as they move down the lane,  
There's one singing gaily, and one smiling palely,  
And one in her sorrow that sighs for her swain.

"O what is this hunger of love?" saith the younger,  
The second makes answer, "I know not. They say  
The heart dies without it."—"Nay, sisters dear,  
doubt it:  
I who know," saith the elder, "am dying away."

## SULLY PRUDHOMME

(1839-1907)

## 214. THE INHERITOR

I AM kind-hearted, wish no creature ill,  
Yet take of oxen stunned by hands more strong,  
And, spite my gentleness, am glad the thong  
Should make my spent horse hasten up the hill.  
I am fair-minded, deem the poor man still  
My brother, and throw crumbs unto the throng;  
A dead, self-stinting forbear laboured long  
That I, from a full board, might take my fill.

Honest, my sleek well-being knows no debt.  
I eat of bread begot of others' sweat  
On fields made fertile by my sires' dead help.  
Thus on unending massacre I browse.  
Nature's elect, I forage or I drowse,  
Bland-eyed and bloody as an ogre's whelp.

## 215. THE STRANGER

I OFTEN wonder with what blood doth beat  
This truant heart that all delight doth tire,  
These thoughts and feelings that unquenched aspire  
As though unending bliss for them were meet.  
Where is the paradise where thou hadst seat?  
In what King's army hast thou taken hire?  
Since vileness here doth flout thine eyes' desire,  
What beauty is thy soul's right counterfeit?

Surely my sorrow for a heav'n unknown  
And my divine disgust spring not unsown:  
Vainly I grope within my heart of mud;

And aye bewildered by my sobbing breast,  
Hearken the grief of my strange kingly guest  
Who veils the glory of his land and blood.

## 216. BODIES AND SOULS

O! happy fleshly lips that glow  
With kisses love-besought or ta'en,  
And happy breasts whose breathings flow  
To merge their sighs where they be fain.

O! happy hearts athrob with blood,  
In loving kindness side by side,  
And happy arms of loverhood  
That hold each other fondly tied;

And happy fingers too that clasp,  
And eyes that gaze, and bodies prone  
That are at peace in slumber's hasp,  
And nought at all when life is flown.

But what have souls but wretched spite?  
That must for ever live aloof,  
Like flames that glow with ardent light  
Behind a lantern lustre-proof.

Against their prison's cloudy wall  
They feel their burning kinship urge,  
And vainly on their neighbour call  
Whose ardour cannot meet and merge.

For these that are immortal held  
Were better far a single day  
Of life to feel their longing quelled  
And in espousal burnt away!

## 217. THE GREAT BEAR

THE Great Bear shone, an archipelago  
Upon a shoreless ocean, through long eld  
Ere wandering shepherds from Chaldea beheld,  
Or ever weary soul knew fleshly woe.  
Innumerable beings to and fro  
Have wandered by its dazzling radiance spelled;  
And, careless of the gaze it hath compelled,  
When the last man lies dead it still shall glow.

"Thou art no Christian then!" believers chide.  
O! fatal outline that doth ever bide,  
Seven golden nails on the dark void of air.  
Thy slow march, thy chill light blur faith's far goal:  
'Twas sight of thee that first bestirred my soul  
To seek the meaning of my nightly pray'r.

## 218. CHAINS

A RHYTHM can link me with melodious air,  
And velvet's softness with this rose I feel;  
A smile can take my eyes as in a snare,  
A kiss can hold my lips as with a seal.

In such frail bonds my life is held by love  
Of thousand other souls whereto I cling;  
How soft soever be the gusts that move  
They rend in me some fleshly fastening.



## 219. HYMN TO DESIRE

O DIE not yet, divine Desire, whose flight  
Doth fan all human things,  
O thou who givest birth unto delight  
By folding of thy wings.

Strange wayfarer, and is thy love outgrown  
Made lip and flower unseal?  
The hidden sources of the world unknown  
Wilt thou no more reveal?

On Beauty's face rain kisses, O Desire!  
Into the pit of Truth  
Bear thou thy torch's still unquenched fire  
Fair Son of fading Youth!

Still give us dreams, still give us love, the great  
Unending thirst that, ever drawing up;  
Is born again to life insatiate  
Out of the drained cup!

ÉMIL BLÉMONT

(1839- )

## 220. THE FALL OF THE YEAR

AH! who hath not joy of chill Autumn's slow coming?  
Who finds not delight in her wistful wan face?  
When skies are all gray and the seas are all foaming,  
Ah! then with sweet sorrow the heart fills apace.



Speak, and my soul shall hear  
His surging tides again.

In royal woe I weep,  
And dream of suns gone blind  
O! bosom hide me deep  
As nights bereft of wind.

## HENRI CAZALIS

(1840-1909)

### 222. STORM IN THE NIGHT

UP leapt the wave as a wild unbroken stallion  
High into the air flinging wild his spumy mane,  
When after sojourn long in the stilly lowland ways  
I, on a night of storm, beheld the sea again.

Loud shrieked the wind with his shrilly voice rever-  
berate;  
Wave after wave charged the rocky ledge of land;  
There, as I stood alone, before the sea's dishevelling,  
Calm breathed my spirit on the storm-embattled  
strand.

Up in the sky, seeking cover like a frightened thing,  
Swift fled the moon letting fall her misty beams;  
Far on the foamy main the breakers roared unceasingly  
Whipt by the wind to a rage of writhing streams.

Hast thou, O Nature, hidden sorrows inconsolable?  
Doth thy deep soul ache with agonies uneased?  
Are the wild storms but thy salt tears falling bitterly,  
And the loud winds but thy wailing unappeased?

Dost thou too suffer, O great Mother from whose  
womb we come ?

We ev'n as thou in thy nights of blackest shade,  
Writhe in our pain with our stormy passions goading  
us;

In thine own image, prone to darkness are we made.

### 223. THE HARPS OF DAVID

SPACIOUS, splendid and pacific, the vast night  
unrolled before us,

We listened to the chanting of the billows on the  
deep,

Our heart-beats all bewildered by the music that they  
bore us,

And all the harps of David in the heavens seemed  
to weep.

The moon rose wanly in the sky, and I a dream was  
weaving:

I dreamt that even she did sing my sorrow to  
allay,

And all the fond waves shoreward borne with passion  
in their heaving

But reached the strand to kiss your feet and ebb  
their life away;

That we were two without a third in all the world's  
vast spaces;

That I was erst an errant soul in darkness all adrift;  
But that the harps of gold that thrilled the deep night's  
hollow places

Had made me sob aloud for love, and brought me  
you for gift;



Consume thy brand, throw wide thy spark,  
And let the flame upthrust again;  
Think of the grave's unending dark  
When thou art turned to dust again.

So near us yawns the dreadful pit;  
Or ere we plunge beyond desire,  
Now let the brand of life be lit,  
O heart fulfil thy fond desire!



## BOOK VI



TO  
R. GEOFFREY W. SAW





While far away into the sky up-swell  
High hills about Olympus' topmost spire.

At times a charger in the maddened raid  
Rears upward, and swings round with dreadful  
  heed.

Then in a bound rejoins the wild stampede,  
For he has seen, by the bright moonbeams made,  
An awful menace of enormous breed  
In monstrous girth of Herculean shade.

## 228. THE TEPIDARIUM

MYRRH sweetens all their supple limbs; they muse  
With flesh not loathful of the chilly flaws.  
A brazier mid the steady wafture draws  
Now flame now shadow o'er their pallid hues.  
On cushioned beds the crimson swathings fuse  
With marble and amber of fair limbs at pause,  
Upright or bending thro' the filmy gauze  
That shows the suave lines of their pliant thews.

An Asian woman, bare amid the billow  
Of the warm air-stream, like a writhen willow  
Lifts nerveless arms and shivers in the wind;  
Whereat the Ausonian maidens pale as swans,  
Do marvel at the swarthy tresses twined  
Sleek and untrammelled round her bust of bronze.

229. TO A TRIUMPHER

CHISEL upon thine arch, great king, a knot  
Of captive slaves and many an agéd chief,  
With armour and the trophied spears in sheaf,  
Despoiléd ships, and festal altars hot.

Whether thou be high-born or churl-begot,  
Thy lineage, honours, titles, long or brief,  
Engrave them on thy frieze or bas-relief,  
Lest in the time to come men know thee not.

Time's fatal weapon shakes. Wouldst thou hand down  
The rumour of unconquerable renown ?

A weed shall rend the trophies of thy might;  
When all thy tale of marble pomp lies tumbled  
Some mower on grass-smothered stone shall smite  
And mar his blade upon thy glory humbled.

### 230. THE ROSE WINDOW

THIS window hath seen many a dame and lord  
In robes of azure, pearl and gold that shone  
Bend low beneath the priestly benison  
Their hoods and helms whereon its radiance poured.  
These at the trumpet-blast would seize the sword  
And those the hooded falcon would set on  
For chace of skyeey game, their masters gone  
To hunt for Christ the Saracenic horde.

Prone lie they all on marble hearses pale.  
A lean hound props them in their silk or mail;  
They do speak, nor listen, nor give sign.  
Only from eyes of stone, as though undimmed,  
They seek and see not on the glass a-shine  
The unfading blossom of the Rose there limned.

### 231. ON THE OLD BRIDGE

ON graven chalice or on hasp of gold  
With the first beam the valiant master bent,  
His brushes ready and his hand intent  
On Latin mottoes to be smoothly scrolled.

Over the bridge the silvern belfries tolled,  
The spurred heel smote, the priestly raiment went;  
The mounting sunbeams in the clear sky blent,  
And lovely girls fared onward aureol'd.

And fain, whom wanton ardour swiftly drove,  
The wistful lads forgot their lover's seal  
And left the clasped hands on the rings undone.  
While, with a slim blade sharp as murderer's steel,  
Cellini, without heed, wrought on alone  
A dagger's hilt whereon the Titans stove.

## 232. THE VISION OF KHEM

### I

'TIS noon. 'Mid burning air and dreadful rays  
The old fiver rolls a desultory stream;  
From the blind zenith the bright earthward beam  
Falls sheer. Stern Phra sets all the land ablaze.  
The sphinxes huge with never-flinching gaze  
And prone flanks crouching under sands that teem,  
Fix staring eyeballs as in endless dream  
On stony peaks that vault the unmeasured space.

Sole, like a speck upon the sky's wan sheet,  
Far off the questing vultures wheel and wheel;  
Both men and beast to the vast flame succumb.  
The hot earth cracks; the Anubis very still,  
His image midmost in the exultant heat,  
Barks at the sun with brazen mouth and dumb.

## II

Old Nilos takes the round moon's silver glance.

There is a stir within the burial-field

Where each proud king in pose hieratic sealed  
Lies where they laid him in his mummied trance.

As in the days of Rhamses there advance

Vast swarms unnumbered that are marched and  
wheeled

Without a sound through the dark night, and yield  
Their bodies to a rock-hewn necromance.

Leaving on walls their counterfeited show,  
After the trophy-bearing priests they go

In honour of Ammon, Lord of the sunbeam.

Sphinxes and Rams, red-girdled, in amaze

Rear on their haunches with astonied gaze,

Waked with a start from their eternal dream.

## III

The innumerable multitude grows more.

Now empty loom the coffins in the crypt.

Their dead are risen. From each cornice slipt,  
Again on high the sacred falcons soar.

Beasts, people, kings in one wide concourse pour.

The gold crest gleams on ghastly brows; tight-lipt  
Are their lean mouths in old bitumen dipt.

The great Gods lead: Hor, Khnoum, Ptah, Neith,  
Hathor.

Then comes the train of Ibis-headed Toth

Twice-crowned, about them the embroidered cloth

Thick with blue lotus-buds. The errant band

Thro' ruined shrines in pomp triumphal goes

O'er chilly pavements whence the wan moon throws

The immeasurable shadows on the sand.

## 233. ANTIQUE COIN

STILL Etna bears the red wine and the gold  
Made glad Theocritus in times antique;  
But in our day 'twere vain for him to seek  
That fruit whereof his gracious verses told.  
As bond-slave bartered and as harlot sold,  
The blood of Anjou Brave and Arab Sheik  
Now strives in Arethusa with the Greek;  
Her face hath lost the godlike lines of old.

Time hastes. All dies. Ev'n marble towers tumble.  
Old Agregente's citadel is down;  
Still Syracuse sleeps where the blue unfurls:  
Only on silver coins that cannot crumble  
Love set unsullied in its old renown  
The immortal beauty of Sicilian girls.

## 234. THE BATH

LIKE the once lovely monster, in the tide  
Wade man and beast, a bare, unbridled twain  
'Mid golden gusts of bitter, sea-blown rain,  
Their limber lines athwart the sun descried.  
The savage stallion and the churl astride  
Deep draughts of the sea's briny odour drain  
Glad of the icy thrill on flesh and mane  
From sprays that on the Atlantic billows ride.

The surge swells, runs, rears upright, shatters. He  
Shouts loudly. The horse neighs, and with his tail  
Smites on the rushing blue as with a flail;  
While on the sky, with blown hair, shudderingly  
They bear a steaming front that breaks in hail  
The foamy lash of the assaulting sea.



## 235. WIND FROM THE SEA

GARDEN and wold by Winter's hand are gript.  
All things lie dead. Over the rock's dull gray  
The Atlantic rollers break in endless spray.  
The withered petals from the stem are stript.  
Yet do I feel an odour honey-dipt  
Blown from the sea about my nostril play  
Kindling my heart-ache for the far away;  
From what strange land has this sweet perfume slipt ?  
  
Nay, but I know. Three thousand leagues it flew  
Out from the West, where the Antilles blue  
Swoon in the ardour of the tropic zone;  
And I upon this surf-beat Breton strand  
Have breathed the truant breezes that once fanned  
The bud that in America was blown.

## 236. THE BED

LET it be draped with serge or with brocade,  
Sad as a bier or merry as a troth,  
There man's begot, begets, and dreams in sloth,  
Child, husband, grandsire, wife or virgin maid.  
Gay or funereal, with God's water spray'd  
Under the cross, or blest with palm, there both  
Begins and ends his life, in its long growth  
From the first dawn till the last candles fade.  
  
Rustic and shuttered, or, sundown or dawning,  
Flaunting its gold and crimson for an awning,  
Shapen of rude oak or of sycamore;  
Happy is he that slumbers without sin  
In the ancestral bed that, stout and hoar,  
Bids welcome and farewell to all his kin.

## FRANÇOIS COPPÉE

(1842-1908)

## 237. THE RUINED HEART

MY heart was as a Roman palace fair  
With granite and rare marble, till a band  
Of ruthless passions bearing axe and brand  
Swept like barbarians, to make havoc there.  
Then was there ruin and desolation where  
Dwelt owls and vipers on the barren land;  
Column and shard lay splintered on the sand,  
And the smooth pathway teemed with briar and tare.

Thro' the unlighted day, the starless night  
Before my palace's disastrous plight  
Daunted, I stood alone and all uncheered,  
Till thou didst bring thy starlike self, O bride!  
Whereon to house our hallow'd love I reared  
An humble hut from ruins of my pride.

## CATULLE MENDES

(1842-1909)

## 238. CONSENTMENT

NOW Ahod on the plain kept countless sheep.  
His spouse one summer day fell deep asleep  
Under a tree nigh Bethel. While she lay  
A vision passed before her, in this way:

Herseemed she from a dream was newly woke,  
And Ahod was before her and thus spoke:  
"Woman, arise and gird thee. Of my herd  
Last year I sold an hundred sheep. One third  
Is still unpaid of the full sum agreed.  
But I am old and spent; and in my need  
Whom may I trust? Get thee to Segor, bride,  
And claim the thirty shekels still denied."

She murmured not of desert, thieves, or dread.  
"Thy servant hears thy bidding, Lord," she said.  
And when with lifted hand he pointed north,  
She took her woollen raiment and went forth.

Now stony were the ways and ill to tread.  
With tears that blinded and with feet that bled,  
She fared till darkness fell, and on through night  
Without or human sound or human sight,  
Till on a sudden from the shadow smote  
A savage scimitar across her throat,  
And savage hands snatched off her robe of wool,  
And left her dying in a bloody pool.

Thereon, in mortal terror, she awoke  
And found her Lord beside her, who thus spoke:  
"Woman, arise and gird thee. Of my herd  
Last year I sold an hundred sheep. One third  
Is still unpaid of the full sum agreed.  
But I am old and spent; and in my need  
Whom may I trust? Get thee to Segor, bride,  
And claim the thirty shekels still denied."

She answered, "Thou hast spoken, Lord. I haste."  
She called her brood about her. Then she placed

Her hands upon her first-born, and she bent  
To kiss her Benjamin. And all intent  
She took her woollen robe and forth she went.

## 239. EXHORTATION

THOU mayst be manly an thou wilt. Go! clench  
thy hilt, and brave the squall  
Where on the peaks the whirlwind shrieks, and chase  
the wild stag till he fall.

Get thee to battle! Brows are bright on those that  
fight. Win food and sleep  
In fast and toil. Go! share the spoil with smugglers  
on the mountain steep!

But in our soulless city ways, the barren days will  
wear thee down,  
Where tears but suit a griefless mute, and mirth but  
masks a weeping clown.

As fountain spray but surges up to brim the cup of  
pools below,  
A watery plume it is our doom to waver ever to and  
fro,—

Unstable wills by sloth worn out that shift about, and  
know no peace,  
Who in despair breathe living air and shrink in  
dread from death's release.

## 240. SOROR DOLOROSA

STAY. Light not the lamp. But let us slake  
Our eyes in shadow, and do thou unbind  
Thy brown hair's glossy torrent for a blind  
About the silent kisses that we take.

\* We are both outwearied with the old heartache.  
 The sun-encumbered sky hath been unkind.  
 Now let us sway in the voluptuous wind  
 That on night's melancholy sea doth wake.

Slow sweetness, surging slumber without dream,  
 Funereal ebb and flow in endless stream,  
 Thy hair wherein my drenchéd brow doth drown .  
 Calm eve that hateth life and fain would pause,  
 How slow the tide of dumb oblivion draws  
 Thro' these close-woven locks of sombre brown.

## PAUL VERLAINE

(1844-1896)

241. "GOD SPAKE AND SAID . . ."

GOD spake and said, "Son, love me. Look and see  
 My piercé side, my shining heart that bled,  
 And my maimed feet whereon the harlot shed  
 Her tears, and mine arms weighted painfully  
 With burden of thy sins! Behold the tree,  
 Nails, gall, the sponge, and all the wounds yet red  
 To win thee from the world's vile lustihead  
 Unto my Flesh and Blood that calls for thee.

Have I not loved thee even unto death,  
 O! brother mine in God, dear child begot  
 Of the same Holy Spirit? My harsh lot  
 Have I not borne? When direst sufferings rend,  
 I share thy sweat, I sob with thine own breath,  
 Thy neighbour in the dark, O hapless friend!"

## 242. "THE SKY ABOVE THE ROOFING LIES

THE sky above the roofing lies  
So blue, so calm!  
A pine above the roofing plies  
Its wafted palm.

The bell in yonder tower swings  
In soft ding-dong.  
A bird in yonder pine-tree sings  
Its plaintive song.

My God, My God, all life is there,  
How still, how sweet;  
And peaceful sounds the wafted air  
From mart and street.

What hast thou done that downward roll  
Thy ceaseless tears—  
What hast thou done, O wastrel soul,  
With thy lost years?

## 243. "O HEARKEN THE SO GENTLE PLAINT"

O HEARKEN the so gentle plaint  
That weeps alone to soothe your ill,  
As shyly sounding and as faint  
As ripples on a mossy sill!

You know the voice (once dear to you ?);  
But now the singer's hid away  
And like a widow veiled from view,  
Although she proudly fronts the day,

And thro' her fluttering weeds astream  
Before the gusty autumn wind  
The steadfast star of truth doth beam  
Upon the troubled heart behind.

It saith, (this voice you hear again),  
True life is to the kind of heart;  
That all of hate and malice wane  
To nothingness when we depart.

It tells the bright felicities  
Of simple hearts that seek their kin  
In selfless bridal, and the bliss  
Of peace that seeketh nought to win.

O hearken the returning voice  
In spousal rapture singing clear!  
O what can make the soul rejoice  
Like staunching of another's tear?

The soul that suffers without wrath  
Is but astray in passing wrong,  
How plain to follow is the path!  
O! hearken the celestial song.

#### 244. MY FAMILIAR DREAM

NOT seldom in my dreams a woman's eyes  
Gaze into mine love-brimmed and love-besought;  
This unknown woman knows my inmost thought,  
And now has this and now another guise.  
For her alone my heart unclouded lies,  
For her alone, alas! its maze is nought;  
A freshness in her healing hands is brought,  
And weeping low, my fevered brow she plies.

If she be dark or fair I cannot tell,  
Nor yet her name save that its sound is sweet  
As those of loved ones we no more may greet.  
Her gaze is like a statue's; and the swell  
Of her grave voice afar seems to retreat  
Like those dear voices grown inaudible.

## 245. GREEN

HERE fruit and flowers I bring to thee; green leaves  
and sprays I proffer;  
My heart that beats for thee alone with them to  
thee I lift;  
With thy two pale white hands flout not the humble  
gift I offer,  
And may those lovely eyes of thine find sweetness  
in my gift.

Behold I come before thee with the dew still on my  
forehead,  
The chilly wind of dawn thereon hath turned it icy  
frore;  
Ah! suffer me to rest my load beside thy feet adoréd,  
There dreaming I'll grow strong again to bear the  
load I bore.

My head upon thy maiden breast in sweet surrender  
leaving,  
Therein the stir of kisses that thy lips have shed  
shall sound,  
So shall I fall on quiet nigh thy dear heart's stormy  
heaving  
And sleep awhile, when thy fond love its haven  
shall have found.



## 246. AUTUMN SONG

THE sobs are long  
On the violins  
Of the barren throng  
Where no leaf spins;  
And my heart's heavy  
And listless grown  
At hearing ever  
Their monotone.

I catch my breath  
And I blanch, aghast  
As the loud clock saith,  
"Thine hour is past."  
And I remember  
The days long flown,  
And thinking on them  
I weep alone;

And away I go  
In the evil wind  
That starts to blow  
Like a thing unkind,  
Hither and thither  
From sill to stone—  
A drifting flotsam,  
A dead leaf blown.

## 247. "ERE THY SOFT RAY BE LOST

ERE thy soft ray be lost  
O! waning star of morn,—  
*A host*  
*Of quails sing in the corn.*

Light with thine ebbing spark  
The poet's love-brimmed eyes.—  
*The lark*  
*Climbs sunward to the skies.*

Look downward upon earth  
With eyes the dawn doth daze.—  
*What mirth*  
*Amid the golden maize !*

Then flash my thought like light  
Down yonder, far away.—  
*All bright*  
*The dew shines on the hay.*

Ere her dear lids uplift,  
Shine through them on her dream.—  
*Swift, swift !*  
*Behold ! the first sunbeam.*

## 248. NEVERMORE

MEMORY, what wilt thou with me ? Autumn gales  
Baffle the bird's flight through the moaning air ;  
The sun hurls wide his steady beams that stare  
O'er the sere wood wherethro' the north wind wails.  
We two alone, and both with dreams astray,  
With locks afloat in air and thoughts adrift,  
When suddenly to me her eyes uplift  
And her voice asks, " When wast thou happiest ?  
Say, "

As soft and song-like as when angels chaunt,  
And my wan smile gives answer, else untold,

And my weaned mouth along her white hand  
sips.

No flowers have scent like that the first ones hold,  
No sounds have such sweet stress as those that haunt  
The first-heard " Yes " from the beloved lips.

### 249. A FORGOTTEN TUNE

A FRAIL hand hovering sets the keys astir  
Wan-faced in the vague twilit rose and gray,  
While like the wafture of light wings in air  
A doting melody begins to sway,  
Falters uncertain as with fear astray  
In this room rife with all the sweet of Her.

And what is this suave to-and-fro that goes  
Like fondling hands of my poor being fain ?  
What would you, wavering song ? What longing flows  
In the soft babble of your shy refrain,  
Now wafted out in the wide air to wane  
Beyond the window where the garden blows ?

### 250. SONNET

ALL through the day down poured the traitorous flame  
And lure of evil days. Now the sun's track  
Throbs with its glamour. Close thine eyes, turn  
back  
From the most dire temptation—fly the shame!  
Like hail the burning light hath downward sped,  
Despoiled the hillside vintage, and left prone  
The cornfields of the valley; the blue zone  
Ev'n of redeeming heaven is ravished.

Then blench, and hie thee soberly to pray'r!  
If yesterdays devour the morrows' bliss?  
If madness, left behind, o'ertake thy way?  
Shalt thou not slay anew old memories?  
For the last wild assault do thou prepare!  
And, lest the storm o'erwhelm thee, haste and  
pray!

## TRISTAN CORBIÈRE

(1845-1875)

## 251. LETTER FROM MEXICO

"You gave the youngster into my care.—He's dead,  
And many more along with him, poor little mate!  
The crew . . . there is none.—There's two or three,  
Will get back home.—It's fate. [so it's said

"Nothing's so fine as a sailor's life for a youth;  
All the landlubbers pine for it sure enough—  
Save the discomfort. So now you may see for truth  
How'prentice life is rough.

"I blub as I write that, hard old case as I be.  
I'd have given my skin to save him and send him  
home . . .  
There's no sense in it, I know . . . but don't blame  
What has to be will come. [me.

"The fever's here as wild as the carnival,  
 We're all on our way to the graveyard to draw our  
 grub.

The Zouave he calls it—our old Parisian pal—  
*Transplanting of the shrub.*

"Cheer up! The world here cracks like a fly in the  
 hand . . .

I found in his bundle some keepsakes he'd often kiss:  
 The portrait of a girl, Turk slippers, and  
 'A present for dear Sis.'

"To Mamma he bid me say: that his pray'rs didn't  
 fail.

To Father: he'd sooner have died in some fierce  
 assault.

Two angels were there beside him when he set sail:  
 A soldier. An old salt."

## GEORGES BOUTELLEAU

(1846— )

### 252. THE AVENUE

CALM summer eves that once did hide  
 The loving bliss of man and maid,  
 Have kept their sweetness sanctified  
 Beneath the mingled maple shade.

And under the dim leafy arc  
 That heard their vows so fond and fain,  
 It seems as though we still may hark  
 Dead lovers ope their lips again.

The mysteries they babble low  
Stir strange discomfort in the breast  
Of those that solitary go  
With ancient dreams all laid to rest.

And slowly they seek open air  
Where beams still set the boughs afire,  
Like aged crones that quake to hear  
The kisses of their old desire.

### 253. THE WILD DOVES

OVER gray skies or shining,  
Skimming the tall palm-groves,  
Where rose-tipt briars are twining,  
Go by the wild gray doves.

Wide-winged for ever wending  
· If suns rise up or fall,  
· They follow the unending  
Far glory of them all.

From every sky imploring  
In torrid climes or chill,  
New summits beyond soaring  
And newer seasons still.

Thus year by year we wander,  
Wild doves that never tire,  
To find for ever yonder  
Our haven of desire.

**GABRIEL VICAIRE**

(1848-1900)

**254. DREAM SONG**

YOU ask me whom in dream I see ?  
It is a King's daughter, pardie !  
And all for me are her love sighs.  
Away, sweetheart, the moon doth rise.

In robe of satin white she streams ;  
She hath a silver comb that gleams.  
The moon is high as grass unown.  
Away, sweetheart, I am thine own.

She hath a mantle all of gold,  
While my poor homespun's worn and old.  
Away, sweetheart, to Blissful Copse.  
The moon's above the willow-tops.

As boys will snare a bird with glee,  
Her soft white fingers fold on me.  
The moon is in the boughs o'erhead.  
Away, sweetheart, and weave thy thread

Thanks be to God, I well am ware  
The boon is sweet that lovers share.  
My love is lovely ; fond am I.  
Away, sweetheart, the moon is high.

## 255. POOR LIZA

POOR Liza died two days ago,  
And not a word foretold her doom.

Now on a stretcher she lies low  
Set midmost in the church's gloom.

The Virgin straight upon her stares  
Who sinned so sore among the quick.

Now at her feet a candle flares,  
Set in a wooden candlestick.

Good folk, new-shriven, outward pass  
In fearful haste to leave the ghost.

The curé mumbles through the mass,  
Lest his lean steak be over-roast.

For thriftless folk his pray'rs are brief  
That ever leave the coffers bare.

There's no one nigh for sign of grief;  
You well might think a dog lay there.

Alone beside the door in dread  
I kneel but nearer dare not go.

I think of the dead girl's dear head  
That once the sunlight gilded so ;

And of her eyes like pansies blue  
That were so soft awhile for me,



Her mouth that now finds nought to do,  
And nevermore will smile for me.

Now all my life is torn in twain  
By every stroke the belfry shakes,

And like a poplar in the lane  
My soul within my body quakes.

Ah! Sweet, how you did give your face  
In spring-time, cheek and brow and tress!

O Misery! Is there any place  
Wherein our hearts find happiness?

Of all the lasses in our town  
They said you had the warmest blood,

And now alone you're lying down  
In four stout planks of beechen wood.

Farewell, our frolic gambolling!  
Farewell, O fairest of our blooms!

No more in the mad dance you'll spring,  
Nor trample on the clumsy grooms!

Your arm as ivory firm and smooth  
Lies shrivelled as a thistle mown,

Your supple throat's as black, in sooth,  
As all the sin that you have known.

Your lips that were as roses red,  
And always quick with love's delight,

May now no more be openéd;  
Your laughing eyes are sealed in night.

Now all your comeliness is spent  
As any shepherd's burnt-out fire,

And you are gone like smoke that's blent  
In air above the belfry spire.

Poor soul forlorn, say have you had  
A glimpse of the good God on high?

Are you in Hell, and are you clad  
In flames that from the furnace fly?

Does burning sulphur sheathe your head,  
Or mitre made of molten ore?

Speak, speak! and is it true the dead  
Die; death on death, for evermore?

If nine days' fast may win reprieve  
From that dark way you're walking in,

And for your soul white raiment weave,  
Nay, now will I straightway begin.

O'er flood and forest I will fare  
With bleeding feet and heart that's riven,

To Notre Dame de Fourvières  
And pray to Her to be forgiven.

Thrice blesséd is the hand that stirs  
Her rosary of golden beads.

One single holy word of Hers  
Can wash us pure of evil deeds,

And white as milk. Her nod can slay  
The wickedness whereby we're lost.

And I will give Her on Her day  
A summer gown, and one for frost;

And at the fair I'll buy anon  
A windmill for Her Jesukin,

With ivory sails He'll blow upon,  
And laugh with joy to see them spin.

## AUGUSTE ANGELLIER

(1848-1911)

### 256. SONNET DEDICATORY

LIKE royal galleys be my verse here written  
That trail their golden trappings thro' the deep,  
Where under a silken dais with lilies litten  
Upon an ivory bed the Queen doth sleep.  
And set proud words like gonfalons appearing  
Triumphant from their cordage as they go;  
May lutes and cymbals make melodious hearing  
With Love's own viols on their decks below;  
May it be all ashine, with loud rhymes blended  
Like salvos from the bulwarks; may it drift  
With tumult of immortal airs attended;  
May every mast green laurel-leaves uplift:

For through Time's spaces and its deeps uncharted  
It bears thy dear name on, O royal-hearted!

## 257. SONNET

THUS shall we live our separate lives unknit,  
And vain appeals shall flesh and spirit make;  
Never one divine instant shall we slake  
Our forlorn human passion infinite.  
Then when the last long sleep we shall have won,  
They will bury thy dear body far from me;  
We shall be exiled in eternity  
As erst we were beneath the shining sun  
  
And last of all each most unhappy name  
On different marbles shall the graver mark,  
And the strong love that turned our souls to flame  
Shall be put out in the unending dark;  
And, kindling nought, we shall leave less behind  
Than any nest wherein the birds are kind.

## JEAN RICHEPIN

(1849- )

## 258. THE SONG OF THE GYPSY BOY

THE hawthorn blossom's white in May.  
As I went by I snatched a spray.  
I took my little dirk-blade bare.  
Hi, there!  
With my blade bare  
I shore the spray  
High up in air!

I wade the brook, a line to throw  
For silver fish. I'll show you how  
When in the sun my dirk shines bare.  
Hi, there!  
With my blade bare  
I'll show you how  
The fish to snare!

When I am tall, for gold I'll ken  
To make a spear shall slaughter men,  
All from this little dirk I bear.  
Hi, there!  
With my blade bare  
I'll riddle men  
From heel to hair!

When I am old, and bearded gray  
For staff I'll take my hawthorn spray,  
For handle this dirk-hilt I bear.  
Hi, there!  
With my blade bare  
Shall end the spray.  
Beware! Beware!

## 259. PROUD SONNET

THE load we bear of trouble is self-made.  
Life is for fighting, and amid the rout  
Of soldier, robber, traitor, murderous lout,  
Hapless goes he unarmed, so fate's obeyed!  
Then get you corselets that will turn the blade  
Against the steel sheath of your bosom stout.  
Let each forge his own armour for the bout,  
And saints wear bristles lest they be waylaid.

So I may meet my murderers without dread,  
I don the hair and set the mail thereon,  
And dare who will to strike their felon steel!  
My mail is perfect pride unconqueréd,  
The hairy pelt into my flesh has grown:  
You who would stab my heart, search where  
you will!

## 260. THE SONG OF THE BEGGING CRIPPLE

WORTHY masters, worthy wives,  
Holy Mary bless your lives,  
Help the crippled beggar frail.  
Lord above and Mary, Hail!  
Spare a mite for me!

Worthy masters, worthy wives,  
Charity the sinner thrives,  
God for gifts shall make you hale.  
Lord above and Mary, Hail!  
Spare a mite for me!

Worthy masters, worthy wives,  
Those unkind to broken lives  
God shall smite their crops with hail.  
Lord above and Mary, Hail!  
Spare a mite for me!

Worthy masters, worthy wives,  
Cow not calves nor woman thrives  
In her labour if I rail.  
Lord above and Mary, Hail!  
Spare a mite for me!

Worthy masters, worthy wives,  
Spare a penny each that thrives  
So to buy you bliss for bale.  
Lord above and Mary, Hail!  
Spare a mite for me!

### 261. THE BEGGAR'S LOOK

THE old tramp on the prowl for bread  
Looked at me and nothing said,

With his bony hand thrust out  
Suddenly, nor deigned to tout

For my pity. Thankless, grim,  
He took the penny offered him.

But his wolfish eyes of gray  
Spake to me. I heard them say,

“Think you for a greasy brown  
I will let you tread me down?

“You but show, with this mean dole  
Kindness to your own poor soul.

“When you give me this round thing  
'Tis yourself you're comforting.

“Sharing thus your store of pelf,  
You owe thanks unto yourself.

“A penny for an old man bowed!  
There's a deed to make you proud!

“ Proud’s the day when you with pence  
Brand your brother’s indigence!

“ For your penny, it were fit  
If I straightway spat on it.

“ Though I take and keep it whole,  
Think not I’ll forgive the dole.”

Thus his gray eyes on me set  
Spake in a dumb alphabet.

I looked back as mute as he  
Desperate in misery.

Then I shut my purse and strode  
Like a felon down the road,

Knowing well the old man’s eyes  
Saw my guilt, and spake no lies.

## LOUIS TIERCELIN

(1849- )

### 262. SUNSET AT KERAZUR

GRAY clouds, and blue clouds, and clouds all full  
of roses,  
To what country far away at evening do you fly,  
Glancing in the twilit mirrors furtively and shy  
Of gray waves, and blue waves, and waves all full  
of roses?



Thus in the silence, very furtive, very shy,  
All alone with you aloft far away they fly,  
My gray dreams, and blue dreams, and dreams all  
full of roses.

## BOOK VII

TO  
MAURICE HEWLETT

(1851-1891)

ON sunny summer evenings I shall wander down a  
  bridle-path,

The tall corn-blades will fondle me the while I  
tramp the turf;  
And dreaming, I shall feel the chilly sweetness on  
my idle path,  
And as a wave the wind shall lave my naked brow  
like surf.

I shall not speak a word, no thought shall fill the  
heart or head of me,

But love shall flow and fill my soul with its o'er-  
brimming tide;

And I shall wander far away, a gipsy in the tread of  
me,  
As happy there with Nature fair as lover with his  
bride.

(1855-1898)

IN tiny townships when the morning drowns  
The belfries chime the time in the still haze,  
Where dawn looks down with sisterly soft gaze,  
The belfries chime the time above the houses.



## JEAN MORÉAS

(1856-1910)

## 266. A YOUNG GIRL'S SONG

THE fennels said, "He is so fond,  
You hold his foolish heart in bond;  
Make ready for his home-coming."  
The fennels tell a guilesome thing.  
(May God have pity on my soul!)

The daisies said, "O! prithee say  
Why did you give your heart away  
For his that's old in trespassing?"  
Too late, too late your questioning.  
(May God have pity on my soul!)

The sages said, "Wait not your swain  
Who long in other arms hath lain."  
O Sages, your ill-boding leaf  
I'll braid about my brow for grief.  
(May God have pity on my soul!)

## 267. ELEGY

MORE deep than darts from Turkish strings  
Love's wanton archery doth hurt  
To rustic lads and royal kings.

For such a sloth of limbs inert  
God had left David's body rent  
Who ever held his loins girt.

Like Solomon grown indolent  
Who erst a prophet greatly wise  
Was at the last of glory shent.

Sly mouth and visage, with soft eyes  
That hide fine snares of shamefulnes  
And a foul grave whence none arise :

Ev'n Agamemnon knew such stress;  
When Menelaus wild Helen saw  
Likewise did he grow comfortless.

Polyxen did Achilles awe;  
For Omphale did Hercules  
The soft wool round the distaff draw.

So Delecus for Stratonice  
Became a slave; of Cressid fond  
Did Troilus forget all ease.

Unto a swarthy visage bond  
Brave Antony his blade let rust  
And heard no more the trumpet sound.

Prudent in all save his own lust,  
Aurelius for his Faustine fair  
Did trail his laurels in the dust.

So am I held by her whose hair  
Is fairer than is gold spun fine.  
(Alas! the hard heart she doth bear),

So hapless is this love of mine,  
No more can my weak breath be blown  
To swell with song the reed divine

Once filled all France with my renown.

## 268. "CAST DOWN THESE LILIES . . ."

CAST down these lilies and these roses flaring,  
Let flutes fall dumb and all the voices sigh  
That fain would swell for me the flood ensnaring  
Of my desires that on the skyline die.

No more upon me thy sweet breath be pouring,  
Fix not on me the splendour of thy gaze,  
For I am burning like a moth upsoaring  
Amid the furnace of the stars' hot rays.

Tempt me no more with thy caresses clinging,  
Withhold the kindling wine of thy hot breath  
From thy mouth's amphora for ever springing;  
Let my heart slumber, let my heart find death.

My heart is still as one in coffin wasted,  
In all the silence of its new-found ease;  
With idle sorrow for a boon untasted,  
Mar not the quiet of its pardoned peace.

## HENRI-CHARLES READ

(1857-1876)

## 269. "I THINK THAT GOD . . ."

I THINK that God when He did mould  
My being, with intent to spare,  
Gave me a heart already old  
Ere I drew air.



And thriftily He set to beat  
 Within my breast a heart outworn,  
 That in old life had known defeat  
 Ere I was born.

It hath survived a hundred fights,  
 And bears a thousand wounds unhealed,  
 But the fell arm, the blade that smites  
 Are still concealed.

A hundred passions throbbing once  
 In bygone ages move its will;  
 Dead flames, dead dreams, dead sunken suns  
 Can stir it still.

Still burning with bequeathéd fire  
 For shapely women perfuméd  
 With sweetness of all wild desire  
 Of love long dead.

O torment of most nether hell!  
 O bitterness of burning doom!  
 To ache with love unquenchable,  
 Nor know for whom.

## EDMOND HARAUCOURT

(1857- )

### 270. THE LOVELIEST VERSES

THE loveliest verses are those that we never can  
 write,  
 They are blossoms of dream whose odour the soul  
 respire,

Or smiles of a phantom, or sparks from eternal  
fires,  
Or voices borne up from the plain to the mountain  
height.

All space is haunted with poems thro' viewless ways.  
A forbidden country, an Eden's inviolate plot  
Where the sin of the art of the singer may trespass  
not;  
Yet there if thou lovest me well thine eyes may gaze.

Some eve when the fervour of love shall our souls  
unite,  
In silence—a silence that swoons in the twilit air,  
Come, lean thy soul o'er my soul, and read thou  
there  
The verses I heard, I heard, but could never write.

## AUGUSTE GAUD

(1857— )

### 271. THE SONG OF THE RAIN

I HAVE drunk of rains that drench  
The holly-boughs' dark blind.  
I love a comely wench  
Whose eyes are kind.

I have drunk of dews that drown  
The heart of lilies frail.  
The bridal bliss hath flown:  
O curlews wail!



There sometimes come clear mornings to a crown of  
roses climbing  
When the soul leaps out with joy like living water  
from the wild,  
When the heart is like a heaven full of Easter bells  
a-chiming  
And the flesh again is spotless and the spirit undefiled.  
It is on these clear mornings to a crown of roses climbing  
That forth I fare as joyously as any happy child.

There sometimes come dark mornings when the  
heart of self o'ersated,  
Feels the pains of oldest age and with its spoil  
would fain retire,  
When the past seems like a faded scene whereon  
there moves belated,  
A pitiful old mummer mouthing shameful things  
and dire.  
It is on these dark mornings, with the load of self  
o'er-weighted,  
That forth I fare as bowed of gait as any grey-  
haired sire.

There are sometimes nights of doubting when the  
cruel anguish rends you,  
When adown the slowly winding stair the tortured  
soul is led,  
When, all unforeseen, the final turn o'er vacancy  
suspends you,  
And the spirit quails before the pit and turns away  
in dread.  
It is on nights of doubting when the cruel anguish  
rends you,  
That forth I fare in darkness like a spirit from the  
dead.

## 273. AUTUMN

SLOWLY we go with the old dog close behind us,  
Tread once again on the road too well we know.  
Red thro' the leafy aisle the dying sunbeams filter;  
Dark on the farther sky the grieving women go.  
As on some cloister garth, green and cell-surrounded,  
Still is the air with a sadness self-indrawn;  
Each golden leaf over-ripened flutters downward  
Like a phantom memory, slow-falling on the lawn.

Silence walks between. . . . Hearts that furtively are  
  scheming,  
Weary of their wayfaring and ripe for new emprise,  
Brood on their secret hopes of sighting the old haven  
Whence they set sail with the morning in their eyes.  
But all the woods to-night are so fulfilled of sorrow  
That ev'n our hearts are moved to lay all self aside;  
Soft are our stifled words that whisper in the twilight  
Of dead illusions as of children that have died.

## 274. A VIOL'S COMPLAINT

MY heart that dreads what time may bring,  
Lies in thy hands a bird-like thing  
That flutters wild with fear of thee.

So shy is he, so loth to lie,  
Let thy words too be low and shy,  
If thou wilt hold him trustfully.

A single word will make him grieve,  
A look alone will make him heave  
With bitter anguish of despair.

For at the words thy sweet mouth saith  
He feels the flight of thy soft breath  
And trembles like a plume in air.

He follows, hovering near alway,  
Thee wheresoever thou dost stray  
With soft smooth throat and trailing gown,

So furtive in his flight and swift,  
So fickle are the wings that lift,  
Thou touchest him and he is flown.

And when this nearness thou shalt flout  
Until he bleed and life ebb out,  
Thou shalt know nothing of his pain;

So slight the touch, thou shalt not heed  
How on a night his heart did bleed  
And on thy soft glove left a stain.

275. CLEOPATRA

DEEP night hangs heavily on Nilos' stream.  
Under the burning starlight, She, grown pale  
Drives off her handmaidens, and of the veil  
With a wide shameless gesture rends the seam,  
Flaunting her love-filled body in wild bliss  
On the high terrace like a rounded grape  
Swollen to ripeness; and her naked shape  
Writhes like a serpent in the warm air's kiss.

Her wild eyes shoot out lightnings. She hath willed  
The world with her sweet perfume shall be filled. . . .  
Dark flower of sex on the night's vastness shaking!  
The Sphinx unmoving on the insensate sand,  
Glows thro' his granite like a burning brand,  
And feels the unending desert round him quaking.



My gold flanks lull the sunbeams; my arms bear  
The weary eyes to slumber. I brought grace  
And sense of godhead unto man; the race  
Of the first Gods rose from my bosom fair.

O man, thy Gods are deaf, thy pray'r denied.  
As one that endeth all, come take my tide;  
I have love's boon to give, love's balm to spill.  
Leave on the wind thy wandering sail adrift.  
No more, no more those weary lids shall lift  
Whereon the clear sea's kisses now lie still.

## CHARLES VAN LERBERGHE

(1861-1907)

### 278. OFFERING TO A DEAD FRIEND

I BRING these flowers, these pure white flow'rs, to  
you in your night,  
For they are light.

To your heart that slumbers, your eyes that see not,  
I offer these,  
For they are peace.

To your voice now faint in the mighty wind of the  
air you drew:  
They are silence too.



## MAURICE MAETERLINCK

(1862— )

## 279. THE SEVEN MAIDS OF ORLAMONDE

THE seven maids of Orlamonde,  
Whenas the fairy lifeless lay,  
The seven maids of Orlamonde  
Went groping for a way.

And they have lit their seven lamps,  
And opened up the turret stair,  
Thrown open wide four hundred doors  
And found no daylight there.

Then come they to the sounding caves,  
And downward o'er the rocky floor,  
And there they find a golden key  
Within a lockit door.

They see the Ocean thro' the seams,  
And fear of death doth flee their wit.  
Upon the lockit door they smite  
But dare not open it.

## GRÉGOIRE LE ROY

(1862— )

## 280. GRANNY SPINS

AT her wheel the old, old granny  
Tells of things as old as she;  
Thro' drowsy lids she seems to be  
A child that spins at a toy jenny.

The flax is gold, and white's her hair.  
The old crone weaves it, very slowly;  
That she may hark, she bends her lowly  
Over the wheel that speaks her fair.

Her right hand turns the wheel alway,  
And with the left the flax is spun;  
She thinks herself a little one  
That turns and turns the wheel in play.

The flax she spins is tawny gold;  
She sees it and it seems her hair;  
And now she's dancing at the fair,  
As round and round the wheel is roll'd.

'Tis smoothly now the wheel is plying,  
Smooth the flax spins by above her;  
Now she hears an ancient lover  
Murmur how for her he's dying.

Now the wheel's last turn is done;  
Empty hands before her spread:  
Her love-stories like the thread  
Of the flax have all been spun.

## STUART MERRILL

(1863-1915)

### 281. EASTER SONG

MY soul's a belfry full of bells,  
With warbling birds behind its bars!  
I see the softly mirrored stars  
That tremble in the glassy wells.

My soul's a holy place enshrin'd,  
My soul's a bower all in leaf!  
The little children weaned of grief  
Go wafting songs a-down the wind.

My soul is full of Archangéls,  
And full of star-y-pointing flight!  
I hear the flail of Fates that smite  
The hoarded grain with secret spells.

My soul is all a-brim with bliss,  
My soul is full of Gods divine!  
O Love, come bind these eyes of mine,  
And lead me where thy pathway is!

282. " MY BROW IS PALE UPON THY KNEES "

MY brow is pale upon thy knees  
With petals of dead roses hung;  
O autumn bride, draw near my side .  
Or e'er thy knell be rung!

How tender is thy touch that soothes  
The weary thoughts that round me cling!  
Lo! crowns do shine on sires of mine—  
Lift up thine eyes, and sing.

Now rock me with thy lullabies,  
And sound of songs that erst were sweet  
When helmed in gold those kings of old  
Swooned at their ladies' feet.

And while those dead times live again  
In music of thy simple chords,  
They shall be swelled like horns once held  
Amid the dance of swords.

And I shall think I fain would die  
Amid that rose-filled robe of thine,  
Too loth, alack! to win me back  
The kingdom once was mine.

## HENRI DE RÉGNIER

(1864- )

## 283. APPARITION

THE sea-hooves whiten on the far horizon.  
Behold! Now they are on us. The wind flies on  
These herded stallions with his whip that urges  
The savage anger of stampeding surges.  
Behold! This stumbles, and that one on-drifting  
After his fellow, sullen, sly, and lifting  
High hooves above the fallen, leaps, is riven  
And falls in turn; an unseen spur is driven  
Into the flanks of the mad beast that follows,  
That charges neighing and fills up the hollows  
With roaring wind and noise of waters steaming.  
O! steeds of storm, O! foam of white manes  
streaming!

I have stood to watch, 'mid bitter wind, uprightly  
The unending race of sea-hooves plunging whitely,  
And still I wait till one wild steed shall blunder  
Out from the host, and with sheathed wings that  
sunder

In showers of sea-rain to my side come fawning  
A spume-flect Pegasus of Ocean's spawning.

## 284. THE SECRET

IF thou wouldst speak unto my grief, be wary;  
 Seek not to know wherefore she doth so weep,  
 Nor why her gaze is downcast and most chary  
 And ever on the flow'rless way doth keep.

To ease her pain, her silence and her sorrow,  
Tempt not benumbed forgetfulness to show  
The shapes of some lost love or pride or morrow  
Whose visage bears the shade of long ago.

With speech of sun and trees and fountains woo her,  
Of light-filled seas and shady woods at rest  
Wherefrom the sky draws up the wan moon to her,  
And all fair things whereby wide eyes are blest.

Tell her how in the spring the rose blooms gladly,  
And gently take her two hands and so sigh:  
The only memory whereof none feel sadly  
Is shape and sound of beauteous things gone by.

## 285. EXPERIENCE

I WALKED behind two lovers, their kisses hearing,  
And watched the loth withdrawal of forms shown  
black  
On the soft-hued sky that the tender Autumn was  
wearing  
Like the pale, pearl-gray that covers a sea-mew's  
back.

And while they wended, full near to the sea's wild riot  
Hurling her waves where the stones of the cliff ran out,  
My heart ungrudging, unbitter, knew no disquiet  
Of sorrow, or strife, or a futile passion of doubt.

They wended along in their beautiful dream united,  
Blent into one and tasting their life's brief boon;  
They moved in the Present and I in the Past benighted,  
And I knew the word that Chimera would tell them  
soon.

## 286. ODELETTE

I MIGHT have made all men aware  
What Love was mine  
When full noon filled the air  
With warm sunshine  
From summer's red gold that such joy doth  
That his laughter sounds shrill [distil  
As one drunken with wine.

I might have cried out:  
My Love is all gladness, behold  
The mantle of purple that down to his feet  
About him doth fold!  
His hands are replete  
With roses a-flutter that scatter their sweet;  
The sky hath no cloud  
Above his warm dwelling of marble that seems  
As a blue-veined flesh in its whiteness  
Most smooth to the mouth. . . .

'Tis otherwise:  
I dress him in a homespun pleat,  
His mantle drags about his feet;  
There hardly lies

A smile about his lips as he doth fleet,  
And when he sings it is an air  
So dim that no man turns to hear  
Nor gather up his song-bud blown  
That fills the twilight full of scent;  
He hath not garden, roof or tent,  
But wears in truth a beggar's wear  
Lest all his wealth of love be known.

## 287. ON THE STRAND

LIE on the sand and thro' thy fingers drain  
Sieve-like the pale sea's silting grain by grain,  
The lovely sand the sunlight turns to gold;  
Then, ere thou drop thy lids, again behold  
The sea harmonious and the stainless sky,  
And when thou hearest thro' thy fingers sigh  
The last light grain of silted sand out-flown  
Ere thou uplift thy lids, think how thine own  
Brief life is but a handful of blown sand  
To fall and mingle on the eternal strand.

FRANCIS VIELÉ-GRIFFIN

(1864— )

## 288. SONG

IN my hands I have taken the rain that fell,—  
The drops that are warm as are tears that rain;  
I have drunk of the draught as a witch's spell  
For rueful bane,  
That so my soul in your soul should dwell.

I have taken the seed from the granary shed—  
The seed that scatters like hailstones lost;  
I have sown in the furrows all hardened  
With morning frost,  
That so your mouth should not lack for bread.

I have taken the grasses and leaves that fade—  
The leaves and grasses whose life is spent;  
Of these a smooth high flame have I made  
And redolent,  
To cheer your vigil of dawn delayed.

With your laughing eyes and your glossy hair,  
The shame of your face and your mouth's red rim,  
I have made a bewildering dawn to flare  
With beams of joy and a harp's loud hymn . . .  
And the day as a hive hums thro' the air!

## ANDRÉ FONTAINAS

(1865- )

### 289. SONNET

SEA-ROAD a-tremble where the dawnlight swoons  
On far-off ocean, shall we find at dark  
Our ships that prop the blue sidereal arc  
Have come to land beside thy loud lagoons?  
City of flowers and victory whose runes  
Speak never of man's sorrow, but still hark  
The mirth of happy sea-folk, whose priests mark  
With pure libation nought but happy moons!



Keep thou life's pride and love's, the gentle light  
 Of thine unsullied musing. With proud gaze  
 Confront the sea, the citadel. Behold  
 The sombre masts that shadow the sea's might,  
 The loud wind's threat to thy fair garden ways,  
 And ware the cloud wherefrom the thunder's  
 roll'd.

## ANDRÉ-FERDINAND HÉROLD

(1865- )

### 290. SONNET

BELOVÉD, all the dust has turned to flower,  
 The frolic Centaurs like spurred cavalry  
 Charge on; the ships, sail sunward, quit the quay  
 Wherewinter through they shrank from the sea's power.  
 Now are the temple columns made a tower  
 Of trailing roses and convolvuli;  
 And Dryads from each happy forest tree  
 Hold smooth white hands out in the glad green bower.  
 Come! for the ways with flowers are aflame.  
 The lily's white, the poppy's hue of shame,  
 Or the blue violet wilt thou cull for pledge?  
 Now hill and vale in joyousness conspire.  
 Come! wander on the wide green meadow's edge  
 That Eros fondles with a breath like fire.

### 291. SONNET

NOW with the black grape's blood the barrels flow,  
 And happy songs rise to the welkin's height  
 From vine-dressers whose gladness seems a slight  
 To forest boughs made voluble with woe

Sere leaves and unconsoléd murmur "Lo!  
Autumn on branch and tree-bole like a blight,  
While men, in our dire misery's despite,  
About their toil with heartless singing go.

"You laugh, poor simple churls, that have no mind  
For Winter stark swift-striding down the wind,  
The slayer of the leaves. Poor fools that sing,  
And hail Death's coming!" But still loud and clear  
Sound the glad carols of the vintaging  
Above the drowsy avenues and drear.

## ROBERT D'HUMIÈRES

(1868-1915)

### 292. THE SONG OF THE FIGURE-HEAD

I AM Young Adventure's Lover and I vaunt  
In spousal chorus to the salt sea's surge  
Thee Son of Flesh and Spirit will I urge  
To unwind the girdle the horizons flaunt.  
Not horror nor the lightning's lash can daunt  
The never-swerving brows that bear their scourge,  
Though the masts groan aghast. The Future's verge  
Calls to me and the unfathomed waters chaunt.

The cordage creaks, and craven is the hull;  
The tree dreams of the land in every lull:  
Aloof, sublime, entranced, to the wide sky  
I lift a gaze no mirages can quell  
And lips deep-carven with the unquenchable  
Immortal thirsting for infinity.

## PAUL FORT

(1872-- )

## 293. "THIS GIRL IS DEAD"

ALL in the middle of her mirth this merry girl is  
dead.

They laid her when the light was dim in cold earth  
for a bed.

They laid her in her finery and all unhusbanded.

They laid her all unhusbanded locked tight within  
her bier.

Then back they came all merry when the sun was  
overhead.

With voices brave they sang a stave: we die or maid  
or wed.

"All in the middle of her mirth this merry girl is  
dead."

So back again into the fields to toil for daily bread.

## 294. "WHAT JOY WHEN FLUTE AND VIOLIN . . ."

WHAT joy when flute and violin make hearts leap  
high with their sweet sound! Now boys and girls  
run out and in, and all the old folk gather round.

*Hurray! all gay with raiment glad, now quickly,  
quickly let us wed, and make a pair of lass and lad!*

What joy when in the church we pass, whereto the  
loud bells summon all—three hundred bells for the  
bonny lass, and one big bass for the bridegroom tall.

*Hurray! all gay with raiment glad, now quickly,  
quickly let us wed, and make a pair of lass and lad!*

The bell now makes us silent all. Alas! 'tis not for us it chimes. . . . Now old folk, let your tears down fall. Perchance 'twill ring for you betimes.

*Hurray! all gay with raiment glad, now quickly,  
quickly let us wed, and make a pair of lass and lad!*

And now the bell will no more call. Then dance to bring them joyous hours. Long life to lad and lass and all! Ah! happy we it is not ours.

*Hurray! all gay with raiment glad, now quickly,  
quickly let us wed, and make a pair of lass and lad!*

What joy when flute and violin make agéd limbs again seem lithe! Now boys and girls run out and in. What mirth is born of music blithe!

## HENRY BATAILLE

(1872-- )

### 295. EVENTIMES

THE hamlets die in the long eventimes,  
When drowsy doves into their cotes retire  
They die as gently as the belfry-chimes  
Or the blue stir of swallows round the spire. . . .

Then as in vigil all the windows blaze,  
Spent flickering flames of vestal sisters stray  
With lantern-lights that hover in the haze. . . .  
The long grey road unwinds itself away. . . .  
The flowers in the gardens shrink forlorn  
To hear the dying hamlet leave the day,  
For well they love the land where they were born. . .  
Now all grows dark, the old walls wane away  
As soft as souls of aged crones out-worn.

## ANDRÉ RIVOIRE

(1872- )

### 296. "PALE AND SLOW, IN HER SUMMER'S VESTURE SO PALE"

PALE and slow, in her summer's vesture so pale,  
So slow in her langour, ah! very pale and slow,  
Wending along with a sorrow that will not wail,  
Blind sky above and the scentless meadows below.

And lo! in her heart, borne down by a load too dire,  
The sound of a horn's farewell more loud than her  
grief. . . .

Ah! thus to pass away and to win for pyre . . .  
A space heaped high with the rain of the yellow  
leaf!

Ah! thus to die, to rest where the gold leaves rest,  
In the tender reluctance of air that the autumn  
brings,  
To hear the sob of the comfortless wind. Far west  
To welcome the falling dusk and the folding wings!

## CAMILLE MAUCLAIR

(1872- )

## 297. THE GARTH

THE weary leafage wanes  
Along the waterway, along the copse;  
The forest feels the rain's  
Light-glancing drops.

The grey cloud sleeps above the close,  
The vine is mirrored where the water flows,  
The wind is calm, the drops slow-drawn  
From topmost leaf to leaf aground  
At last fall gently to the lawn  
With scarce a sound.

On the horizon the last light delays,  
All things fade out in the autumnal haze,  
The laggard twilight hearkens to the streams,  
The ruddy garth with sleep is now fulfilled,  
Hard by a window gleams . . .  
The night of God will soon have all things stilled.

O influence of the rainfall and the hours  
On nature and upon my soul this night,  
O! all my yearning to be calm this night!

To calm forgetfulness all things are led,  
Wane out in sleep that comes to them at will.  
Not ev'n the forest's self shows any dread:  
I only slumberless behold them still,  
Their mild consentment in the day's demise,  
A child indeed, and with a child's wide eyes. . .

## 298. QUESTIONING

DO souls grow ripe and wither too  
As leaves and lovely women do ?—  
Aye, surely, child, it must be so.

And doth the heart forget as well  
The wounds once deemed unstanachable ?—  
My child, my child, God wills it so.

And can forgiveness still be borne  
In loving hearts once left forlorn ?—  
Perchance, my child, it may be so.

Shall we behold ourselves anon  
The very body joy puts on ?  
Nay, child, it never may be so.

## FERNAND GREGH

(1873— )

299. " I HAVE GRIEVED TOO MUCH . . . "

I HAVE grieved too much erewhile for fleeting pain,  
And now my griefs I may not recognize.  
'Tis well they spake to me in furtive sighs,  
And called to me with their light voices fain;  
For them no more the tears will fill my eyes.

My sorrows now are unknown souls to me,  
Wayfarers who were loved perchance of yore  
Whom now no more I wait for patiently,  
They pass me by and know me now no more:  
Too late, too late; their souls have shut the door. . . .

CHARLES GUÉRIN

(1873-1907)

### 300. OUT OF THE DEEP

AT the hour when the stars from the eastern spaces  
are peering,  
I stood on the cliffs that look on the sea, and  
strode  
Alone and laughing with pride in the squall's career-  
ing  
To feel my blood leap up at the tempest's goad.

At the base of the cliffs there was thunder of waves  
defeated;  
I measured the spaces of western sky whereon  
A sunbeam flamed farewell as the sun retreated  
And over the waters its waning glory shone.

I leant by a rocky wall smooth-hewn and salted  
By the immemorial sprays of the endless tide,  
Like a cross on the brink of a lonely pit, exalted  
I clasped all space as I held my arms out wide.



And my full heart beat with the heart of the world's  
wide bosom,

The sea's salt out of the sea my strong veins drew;  
I felt my body within me grow quick and blossom

With seed of stars that the winnowing night let  
through.

I wanted to moan more loud than the ocean thunders,  
To breathe out my being in air like the tempest  
wrack;

And, death o'er-leapt, feel the sacred ardour that  
sunders

The soul from self that again unto God goes back.

## NOTES



## NOTES

1. I have attempted the idiom of "The Twa Corbies" and its kindred lays, considering it most suited in character, though not wholly in time, to this folk ballad of the old French. The original may be found in Professor Legouis' admirable (and unanswerable) "Défense de la poésie française à l'usage des lecteurs anglais" (Constable). *Skeel* is old Scots for *pail*.

2. A fragment only of the whole.

3. A fragment only of the whole. Of JEHANNOT DE LESCUREL (Johnny of the Squirrel) nothing but this nickname is known. Perhaps he was wont to sing for his supper at a tavern bearing this sign.

JEAN FROISSART (p. 38). Selfsame with the Chronicler, a rôle in which he shines with a braver lustre.

EUSTACHE DESCHAMPS (p. 39) was poet, traveller, and man-at-arms. He seems to have met Chaucer, to whom he addressed a ballade with the refrain "Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier," thus reminding us who first brought the laurel sapling to these isles, and whence he cut the shoot.

10. This is rendered from the version given in "Chansons du XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle," collected by Gaston Paris; but it is probably of much earlier origin.

16. I have condensed the seventeen lines of the original into thirteen, the number common to the Duke's other rondeaux here rendered. Neither *flagon* nor *wench* will be found in the original, but everything which implies them.

20. The Greater Testament maintains the octosyllabic lines throughout, the variation here being due to the translator alone. *Last stanza, last line, last word.* Let pedants rail! I believe that an English Villon would have abhorred the *I* of the purist, as firmly as I believe that good writers of English have too often been dragged askew by the perfervid zeal of Latinist grammarians.

22. Villon escaped, not for the first time; but how, when, or where he died is unknown.

23. The fine version by the late Mr. John Payne attributes the hard stroke of the *ninth line* to Death; but as the original text gives no warrant for this, it seems to me likelier that Villon had in mind the outlawry and disciplinary pains which he endured

in this life. The *fourth line* seems to suggest that the "prison-crop" was already known in his day.

24. The original is in sonnet form; and I have endowed with incalculable wit the lady whom Saint-Gelais rallied for uncounted whimsies.

MARGUERITE DE NAVARRE (p. 56). Sister of Francis I, married Henri of Navarre. She was a witty woman who wrote verse and prose, was highly esteemed by Erasmus and beloved by the grateful Marot, whom she protected.

CLÉMENT MAROT (p. 56). Owing to his Protestantism he sought refuge at Geneva, but was driven thence for his ill behaviour. He died in penury at Turin.

26. *Third line*. The second-named was probably Bonaventure Despériers, another writer of the Protestant fold whom Marguerite of Navarre befriended.

CHRISTOPHE PLANTIN (p. 59) was a famous printer who emigrated from Tours to Antwerp in 1549, his *Alcala polyglot* being his masterpiece. The Musée Plantin at Antwerp contains the actual press with which he printed the original of this sonnet, and copies are still printed there and sold to visitors, in the form of post-card souvenirs, for the sum of one penny.

PONTUS DE TYARD (p. 63). The eldest of the *Pléiade*, and probably the least talented.

PIERRE DE RONSARD (p. 63). His ancestor came from Rumania and fought for Philippe of Valois against the English, nearly two centuries before the poet was born at the Château of Poissonnière, built from the royal bounty awarded him for his services in war. Ronsard became page to the Dauphin François; and, at twelve years of age, on the marriage of his master's sister to King James V of Scotland, accompanied her to her new home, and spent two years in Edinburgh before returning to France. He had visited Flanders, Holland, Germany, and Italy on various diplomatic missions before he was sixteen. Thenceforward, as the result of a severe illness, he was deaf. For the influence of the *Pléiade* on English poetry see "The French Renaissance in England," by Sidney Lee (Clarendon Press), and "The French Influence in English Literature," by A. H. Upham (Columbia University Press). The best appreciations are to be found in "Ronsard and la *Pléiade*," by George Wyndham (Macmillan), and "Avril," by Hilaire Belloc (Duckworth).

38. Written for his third and last-sung love Hélène de Surgères, a maid-of-honour to the Queen-mother, Catherine de Médicis.

39. Ronsard's first love, of whom we know hardly more than her name—Mademoiselle du Pré.

40. This sonnet of Ronsard is a close imitation of one by Petrarch.

42. Written of his second love, Marie du Pin, who died a maid.

43. The original has seven more stanzas.

44. This sonnet of Du Bellay is closely imitated from one by Daniello.

47. The Berecynthian is Cybele, the goddess of Fecundity, one of the Titan dynasty and a great producer of gods. Festivals in her honour were held on Mount Berecynthus by the Phrygians, to whom she was especially dear.

50. This was Du Bellay's version from the Latin of Navagero, a Venetian (1483-1529).

LOUISE LABÉ (p. 78) was one of the learned ladies of Lyons, where the influence of Petrarch was then predominant, it being on the main road between France and Italy and a frequent halting-place for those going to or from Rome. It was thus that she met OLIVIER DE MAGNY (p. 83) and conceived the ardent passion which so many of her sonnets celebrate.

REMI BELLEAU (p. 80) travelled in Italy and translated Anacreon. Next to Du Bellay, was probably the closest of Ronsard's friends.

ESTIENNE PASQUIER (p. 83) is notable as the author of "Recherches sur la France," a most important contribution to the literary history of the sixteenth century.

ESTIENNE JODELLE (p. 84) was chiefly known during his lifetime as an author of tragedies. His "Cléopâtre" was given before Henri II, with Belleau and Jodelle himself among the players. Ronsard and his friends afterwards offered him a goat garlanded with ivy after the antique fashion, and this innocent frolic became the ground of a charge of paganism and sacrilege which embittered the old age of the erstwhile lover of Cassandra, Marie, and Hélène.

58. *Eighth line.* I have put in *barque* and *sheep*, which all the preceding images suggest, but which Jodelle does not cite by name.

JEAN-ANTOINE DE BAIF (p. 85) was born at Venice during one of the diplomatic missions undertaken by his father, in whose company Ronsard was afterwards to visit the German States.

GUY DE TOURS and JEAN DOUBLET (p. 87). Nothing seems to be known of these two poets save that the latter was born at Dieppe and that his verses were published in 1559.

JEAN PASSERAT (p. 88) is said to have been as skilled in Greek and Latin verse as he was in French. He was professor of eloquence in the Collège de France, and wrote the Latin inscription which may still be read on the clock of the Palais de Justice at Paris.

64. Addressed to Henri III. *Ninth line.* "La teste verte" is a French equivalent for our "hare-brained"; but I have been

loth to sacrifice the verbal antithesis of the original, and am sorry that no ingenuity can preserve in English the "sonnet" and "sonnettes" of the *eleventh line*.

GUILLAUME DU BARTAS (p. 92) wrote a long and wearisome epic of the Creation which was translated into English by Joshua Sylvester within ten years of its author's death. His fame is now deservedly rescued from oblivion by this one sonnet.

PHILIPPE DESPORTES (p. 93) was born at Chartres and started life as a lawyer's clerk, losing his place for making love to his master's wife. He then, by good luck, fell in with the retinue of Charles IX and his lady, Catherine de Médicis, but, failing to win a footing there, took hire as secretary to the Bishop of Puy, whom he accompanied to Italy. He found time during his travels for the study of Petrarch, Bembo, and the lesser rhymers, whom he freely adapted. Returning to Paris, he obtained the patronage of the Duke of Anjou, on whose succession to the French throne he fell on smooth days and became the richest abbot in all France.

69. Appears to be adapted from the well-known epigram by Leonidas of Tarentum, No. IV, Section VI, in Mackail's "Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology." A Latin poem by Nava-gero, the Venetian scholar mentioned above, is also very like it, and perhaps served as model.

70. A good example of Petrarch transferred.

THÉODORE-AGRIPPA D'AUBIGNÉ (p. 95) was a redoubtable Protestant continually at war both with sword and pen. He was four times condemned to death, but escaped, to die peacefully at the verge of fourscore. His "Tragiques" give the history of the religious wars of the latter half of the sixteenth century in which he took an active part, and, like Ronsard's "Discours" but from the opposite camp, anticipate the "Châtiments" of Hugo in their thunderous eloquence of invective.

72. Henri IV, whose abjuration of Protestantism he never forgave.

FRANÇOIS DE MALHERBE (p. 99) was the god of poetic idolatry during the whole of the seventeenth century, and even later. He was well dubbed by Mlle de Gournay "docteur en négative," for his influence on poetry was no more than that of grammatical corrector and codifier. Critic, analyst, classifier, but not creator, his importance is mainly linguistic, and he certainly left behind him sharper and surer tools of expression than he had found.

73. The first seven and the last three stanzas of the very famous original, thus following the practice of French anthologists.

\* 74. This was his last surviving child; but in spite of Malherbe's righteous ire, he seems to have been killed in a duel fairly fought.

**MADemoiselle DE Gournay** (p. 101) was the adopted daughter of Montaigne, and a staunch upholder of Ronsard against the onslaughts of Malherbe.

**MATHURIN REGNIER** (p. 101) wrote brilliant satires and was well called by De Musset "De l'immortal Molière immortal devancier." He married a daughter of Desportes. Though belonging both by chronology and his own practice to the classical school, he laughed at the pretensions of Malherbe, of whose essential prosiness he was well aware.

76. The first five of eight stanzas.

84. I have not been able to discover to whom this was addressed. "Your Spanish heart" (*line eight*) possibly means "your treacherous heart," there being a long-smouldering feud with the neighbouring State, and *Spanish* being therefore at that time a term of strong misfavour.

**PIERRE CORNEILLE** (p. 108) was the father of French poetical drama. The "Marquise" was Mlle Duparc, a comedienne whom Corneille courted when well past his meridian.

**PAUL SCARRON** (p. 110) was famous during his lifetime as a burlesque-writer. He married the granddaughter of D'Aubigné, who afterwards became famous as Mme de Maintenon. He passed the greater part of his life paralysed and racked by rheumatism.

**JEAN DE LA FONTAINE** (p. 111) spent a life of gentlemanly dawdling and phylandering till nigh forty, when the exhaustion of his patrimony drove him to seek the favours of the great by his pen.

88. Adapted, like most of La Fontaine's fables, from Æsop.

89. This is one of La Fontaine's own invention, and the Levantine legend—a legend.

92. *Line seven*. "Martin" is—or was—a French nickname for a whip.

**PHILIPPE QUINAULT** (p. 116) wrote the libretti for Lulli's operas.

96. A fragment from a much longer piece.

98. A fragment from the conclusion of "Circe."

99. Mme Lullin was a centenarian of Geneva.

100. Grétry is, perhaps, the most celebrated musician among the Liégeois. His statue still stands (I hope) in front of the municipal Opera House of his native city.

102. Fréron was one of Voltaire's most bitter opponents.

**JEAN-FRANÇOIS DUCIS** (p. 123) was one of the first to adapt Shakespeare for the French stage. He greatly admired Garrick.



112. Written in the prison of Saint-Lazare where Chénier passed the last months of his life, leaving it only to mount the scaffold. Happily for us, the poet's sympathies were deceived. The fair unknown was the Duchesse de Fleury, an adept at amorous intrigue, who escaped the scaffold to continue her adventures.

MARIE-JOSEPH CHÉNIER (p. 129), a younger brother of André.

113. The first, third, fifth, and sixth stanzas of the fourteen addressed to the "Supreme Being."

ANTOINE-VINCENT ARNAULT (p. 130) wrote tragedies, which are now entirely forgotten, though he had a vogue under the first Empire. He suffered exile on the fall of Napoleon; and the "thunder" of these lines is generally interpreted as symbolizing the blow which fell on him from the new regime.

PIERRE-JEAN DE BÉRANGER (p. 133). The enormous vogue enjoyed by Béranger during his lifetime can only be explained by the topical character of his pieces, which have often a political bearing. His place in French literature is somewhat analogous to that of Dibdin in ours, though the Frenchman has a nimbler talent and a wider range—and other good men wrote him tunes and gave him a wide currency.

120. A fragment from the last section of "La Vigne et la Maison."

124. These few lines are the prelude to the narrative poem "La Neige," telling how White Emma, Princess of Old Gaul, fell in love with a page.

125. Fifteen stanzas from a total of forty-eight.

126. The opening section only of Vigny's masterpiece, "Le Cor," a signpost on the highway of the romantic revival, and written before the "Chanson de Roland" had received the attention which followed on the recovery at the Bodleian in 1837 of the complete manuscript. *Second line, third stanza.* The three chief heights of Marboré, enclosing a natural amphitheatre, are each over three thousand metres high. *Last line.* Roland was one of the twelve peers of Charlemagne, and perished at Roncevaux while covering the retreat of the Emperor's main army. For an excellent summary of Vigny's achievement see "French Profiles," by Edmund Gosse.

134. *First line*, "the Florentine," i.e. Petrarch, as the original says.

136. Written on September 3, 1847, of his daughter Léopoldine, drowned with her husband after but three months of marriage. Hugo set out as foretold, and the next day wrote his deathless monody "À Villequier," on the fourth anniversary of the calamity.

137. These lines appear as a prelude to "Les Châtiments," and the "tyrant" is, of course, Napoleon III.

141. The first five of eleven stanzas, the later ones losing somewhat their character of an impersonal apostrophe and appearing as an address on private and particular troubles to his unwedded spouse, Juliette Drouet.

143. *Last line*. The original has "le chardon des sables." Probably the sea-holly is intended.

144. Represents fourteen lines from Section VI of "Les Sept Merveilles du Monde," in the "Légende des Siècles." I am doubtful of the propriety of this recasting in a form which Hugo never used, but could not withstand the temptation which it offered for underlining the obligations due from Hérédia to his great forerunner in historiography.

JULIEN-AUGUSTE-PELAGE BRIZEUX (p. 167) was the poet of Brittany. He wrote rustic tales mingled with a good deal of folk-lore gathered among the fishermen and tillers of his native soil.

146. This song—or, rather, something to the same effect—used to be sung by the Breton peasantry after nightfall each first of November in a district of French Cornwall near Finistère.

CHARLES-AUGUSTIN SAINTE-BEUVE (p. 170) as a poet was all things by turn and nothing long. He helped in the rehabilitation of Ronsard, and is now remembered for his effort to adapt the methods of the English Lakists to the French Muse. As a critic he was unrivalled.

149. The first sixteen of forty-eight lines.

152. Nerval's title, "Les Cydalises," is only understandable as a French form of the Greek *κυδαλιμος*, and I have rendered it accordingly.

155. This sonnet should be compared with De Nerval's own "Fantasy" (No. 153) and Baudelaire's "My Former Life" (No. 191), the sentiment of reincarnation being common to all three. I have left the original (Spanish) title—meaning *luckless*—unrendered. *Line two*. Perhaps Waifre, the last of the hereditary Dukes, whose losing fight for freedom is described in vol. i, chap. xiv, of "The Deserts of Southern France," by S. Baring Gould. *Line five*. Pausilippo is a lovely grotto near Naples, tradition placing Virgil's tomb in the immediate vicinity. *Line nine*. The Marquis de Lusignan (1753-1815), the last of an illustrious line, fled to Hamburg on the outbreak of the first Revolution, and vainly sought reinstatement as a senator under successive regimes. His ancestor Étienne de Lusignan (1537-1590), of the royal house of Cyprus, took holy orders and won high episcopal honours in both Italy and France, after his dynasty had been overthrown by the invading Turks. *Biron* (1524-1592), Duke and Marshal of France, was the seven-times-wounded and never-beaten general who stormed La Rochelle during the Huguenot

troubles. Or the allusion may be to his son (1562-1602), beheaded for a treason which he refused to avow. The suggestiveness of these two names can hardly be felt by an English reader. Boadicea, Llewellyn, and Bruce might have the same evocatory power for us. The Queen of Sheba is perhaps meant in *line ten*, it being one of De Nerval's hallucinations that he was in love with this lady re-enshrined in later flesh. In Mr. Eccles's book (see note below) other—and perhaps likelier—personages are suggested; but the only thing certain is that all these names are merely used as symbols of lost glory.

156. Having arrived at the proper ending of his "Ballad," De Musset cocked a snook at his own Diana by parodying his lines in a set of lewd stanzas, which are to be found in some early editions. This is one of the boyish tricks which seem to suggest that Lamartine and De Lisle were right in regarding him "en garçon." He was always young, *au cœur de cire*.

159. This was written of the Princess Belgiojoso, one of the many lights-o'-love with whom De Musset vainly sought consolation after the rupture of his famous first liaison. The lady was not dead when he wrote it; she had merely withdrawn her favours. The first stanza refers to one of four recumbent figures supporting the tomb of the grandson of "Il Magnifico" in the church called of San Lorenzo at Florence.

160. From the "Nuit de Mai." I have taken the opening lines of several passages and linked them together into a single invocation, skipping the intervening descriptions.

161. This was written in 1841, after having met George Sand by chance while out walking. Six from a total of forty-five stanzas.

162. The original is in sonnet form, with octosyllabic lines.

166. I have put stars where Gautier gives no sign of a break. It seems to me that the lyric would close more effectively on the accent of wistful suspense. The rebuff of the last two stanzas is too rude; and where is the lover who would spoil his chances with a *douche* of such chilly wisdom?

167. Written in answer to the lines addressed to him by De Banville. See No. 204.

168. The first three of nine stanzas.

170. These lines reproduce the first, second, sixth, and seventh of the forty-one stanzas entitled "Alma Parens."

171. Three stanzas from the close of "L'Amour et La Mort."

174. Candour compels me to state that Soulayr wrote of cherries and sparrows. But rhyme will not be denied.

LECONTE DE LISLE (p. 199) wrote in his preface to "Poèmes Antiques": "... the entire Christian cycle is barbarous.

Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton prove only the strength and reach of their individual genius; their speech and their conceptions are barbarous. . . . Modern poetry, a confused reflection of the stormy personality of Byron, the sham and sensuous religiosity of Chateaubriand, the dreamy mysticism of Over-Rhine, and the realism of the Lakists, rises in self-disturbance and wastes away." Holding such views, (and proclaiming them), it is not wonderful that his recognition was long delayed, and that the poet who in French literature is to Hugo as Milton to Shakespeare in ours should have had to wait until his sixty-eighth year for election to the Académie Française, when he was given the vacant *fauteuil* of the dead Hugo in fulfilment of the latter's expressed desire.

177. In the original the first and last lines of each stanza rhyme.

179. One of the very few poems in which Leconte de Lisle deigns to avow his tenderness. I have left his original title.

187. I am aware that my rendering of the *last line* is debatable, but "néant divin" makes poor sense in English, and in any case to De Lisle it may very well have implied the meaning I have here assumed for it.

189. This sonnet is obviously referred to by Swinburne in Stanza VI of his "Ave atque Vale" in memory of the poet. So, too, No. 191 is clearly indicated in Stanza II of the same immortal elegy.

192. Pascal, the great French philosopher, as the result of an accident suffered from the hallucination of a pit continually yawning at his feet. It is curious that Baudelaire should have translated the Tales of Poe, in one of which this horrific idea is treated. "The Influence of Baudelaire," by G. Turquet-Milnes (Constable), traces very fully his literary ancestry and descendants, though we cannot help thinking that the author credits him with too large a family, and admits into the direct line many who are no more than remote collaterals.

194. Written of the Creole mistress whom he brought back from the voyage to the tropics on which he had been sent by his bewildered parents while he was still short of his majority.

195. Written of the same. What Baudelaire may have meant by "Courtisane imparfaite" is not clear; but the misery he suffered from the continual infidelities of this coloured woman have suggested my rendering of "adulterous cheat."

HENRI MURGER (p. 220) is best known as author of the famous "Vie de Bohème," from which the story of Puccini's well-known opera is drawn.

LOUIS BOUILHET (p. 221) was at school with Flaubert.

LOUIS MÉNARD (p. 222). A convinced communist who suffered exile.

204. See Gautier's lines (No. 167) written in answer.

ANDRÉ THEURIET (p. 229) is even better known as the prose-poet of the woods and fields, amid which he always moved whether as singer or story-teller.

ARMAND SILVESTRE (p. 231). George Sand introduced his first book to the public. Of his poetry Anatole France has well said, "Il tire de la volupté physique un mysticisme exalté."

LÉON DIERX (p. 233) was, like his master Leconte de Lisle, a native of Réunion. His work, perhaps, shows more affinity with the Névrosés, who derive from Baudelaire and culminate in Samain.

211. The first eleven of a long series of lines all similarly linked together by recurring phrases.

ACHILLE MILLIEN (p. 234) is the poet of the Nivernais. He is a great linguist, and has collected and translated the folk-song and poetry of Eastern Europe and of the Spanish peninsula.

213. In Professor Saintsbury's "French Lyrics" will be found a twelfth-century song from which this may have been derived.

218. The last two of four stanzas.

HENRI CAZALIS (p. 240) was a doctor of medicine, and published most of his books (other than medical) under the pen-name of Jean Lahor. He was deeply versed in Oriental literature, and wrote a study of William Morris.

STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ (p. 247) was professor of English in several of the lesser Universities, and finally at the Lycée Condorcet in Paris. He translated Poe's "Raven." He has been well described by Huysmans (writing from the life), in his novel "À Rebours," as "raffinant sur des pensées déjà spécieuses, les greffant de finesses byzantines, les perpétuant en des deductions légèrement indiquées que reliait à peine un imperceptible fil." 225 and 226 are versions after the two most intelligible of Mallarmé's pieces; but even here the "imperceptible fil" is none too easy to follow, and I have linked up his ellipses with threads of my own weaving. See "French Profiles," by Edmund Gosse (Heinemann), for a shrewdly humorous account of him.

JOSÉ-MARIA DE HEREDIA (p. 248) was born in Cuba of Spanish blood by a French mother, and was descended from one of the most illustrious of the "Conquistadores." He gave a lifetime to the production of a single volume of one hundred and eighteen flawless sonnets. See "The Claims of French Poetry," by J. C. Bailey, and "A Century of French Poetry," by F. Y. Eccles (both Constable). Mr. Bailey appreciates well without losing his English standpoint, while the latter book is a rich mine of succinct information, and a marvel of critical analysis and clear exposition of matters by no means easy of summary assortment. Mr. Eccles understands and can feel French rhythm

and its suggestiveness in a way that few born Englishmen can ever hope to achieve, even after long study and residence beyond the straits. Mr. Gosse's "Critical Kit-Kats" (Heinemann) also gives an excellent account of Heredia's achievement.

228. Neither "willow" nor "swans" will be found in the original sestet.

231. The Ponte Vecchio at Florence. See "Florentine Vignettes" (Elkin Mathews), by the present writer, from which this version is reproduced by permission of the publisher.

CATULLE MENDÈS (p. 255) is, next to Hugo, one of the most amazing *virtuosi* among French poets. He had, perhaps, been greater but for this fatal facility of production, which too readily supplied what was required of it by the baser public of his day.

238. From "Contes Épiques." Save Hugo, Mendès has no equal in this kind. He caught from the greater master the trick of consummating his epic narrative with a quiet close, as in the famous "Donne-lui tout de même à boire, dit mon père."

239. The opening lines of the original have the very sound of the squall they speak of.

241. Written in the prison at Mons where he was converted while undergoing a sentence for his murderous attack on Arthur Rimbaud (see No. 263), the youth whose sinister fascination caused Verlaine's rupture with his wife. For biographical details see "Paul Verlaine," by the present writer (Constable), from which Nos. 241, 248, and 250 are reproduced by permission of the publishers. For his æsthetic philosophy see "The Symbolist Movement" (Constable), by Arthur Symonds, than whom no writer on our side of the Channel has ever better understood the aims of his school, or more happily rendered their moods and their music.

243. Another of those pieces which were written in the prison at Mons. It has been interpreted as an appeal to his wife, but it seems likelier to be a sinner's soliloquy addressed to his better self.

251. Bitter railery resounds in all that this author wrote. *Fourth stanza, last line.* The original has "Jardin d'Acclimatation," the last word rhyming with the "ration" of the second line's terminal. "Grub" here bears—quite accidentally—a double meaning, which accords well with the accent of tragic irony heard in the original.

GABRIEL VICAIRE (p. 268) was the poet of the Bressans, for whom he did with a lighter touch and a truer accent of the folk what Brizeux had accomplished for the Bretons forty years earlier.

AUGUSTE ANGELLIER (p. 272) was professor at the University of Lille. He wrote an important study of the life and work of Burns.

258, 259, and 260 are from "La Chanson des Gueux," mostly dealing with the life of the outcasts of the road, with whom M. Richepin passed a spell of his adventurous youth. The "Proud Sonnet" is a good example of his fondness for truculent metaphor. He was condemned to imprisonment and a heavy fine for his daring fidelity to the speech and thought "de ces aventureux, de ces hardis, de ces enfants en revolte à qui la société presque toujours fût marâtre, et, qui, ne trouvant pas de lait à la mamelle de la mauvaise nourrice, mordent à même la chair pour calmer leur faim."

LOUIS TIERCELIN (p. 277) is another of the "Poètes du Terroir." No. 262 is from "La Bretagne qui chante."

264. *Line seven.* Rodenbach was born at Tournai and passed his boyhood at Bruges and Ghent. His phrase "sur les escaliers des pignons noirs" will be well understood by those who have visited these Flemish towns.

265 The first two of five stanzas.

JEAN MORÉAS (p. 283) was a Greek and born at Athens, but settled permanently in France before he was twenty. He started his career as a thorough-going symbolist with fantastic ideas as to freedom of language, but relapsed in 1891, when he founded what he called an "Ecole Romane," which, we fear, has left small wake in its passing. In this latter period he proposed a much-needed return "dans la pensée comme dans le style, à l'équilibre et à l'harmonie," for lack of which many of his followers bade farewell both to melody and sense. He even proposed to restore archaisms, to multiply inversions, and to encourage the invention of compound words in the manner often used--and abused--by Ronsard and Du Bartas in the sixteenth century.

267. An example of what Mr. Eccles well calls "triumphant assimilation," the original being cast in a French five hundred years old, which I have done my best to mimic in suitable English.

HENRI-CHARLES READ (p. 285). This precocious boy died of brain fever at nineteen, a fact which gives an added significance to these strangely premonitory lines. The surname is derived from the poet's great grandfather, a Scotch colonel.

ALBERT SAMAIN (p. 288) was a native of Lille and died of consumption. Perhaps these two facts may help to explain why his wistful music is so full of yearning for "an ampler ether, a diviner air." He has painted his own portrait perfectly in a single line:

"Mon âme est un velours douloureux que tout froisse."

275. The second of twin sonnets. Samain's sonnets are, architecturally, far inferior to Hérédia's; indeed several of them run over into a fifteenth line. But he paints as a lover what Hérédia views as an epicure. Even in this quasi-Parnassian work

such a line as "un adieu rose flotte au front des monuments" reveals the impressionist to whom shadow is most articulate.

276. This apotheosis of a poet's ambition, this dream of fame, follows in the original the correct sonnet form. The similes in the *fourth* and *last lines* of the second stanza are not in the original.

ANATOLE LE BRAZ (p. 292), the chief interpreter of the Breton soul in modern France. The spirit of Celtic myth and mysticism has been finely wrought by his hands into the mould of a language whose character and traditions are alien to it, and the achievement is therefore the more remarkable.

STUART MERRILL (p. 295). An American reared in France.

FRANCIS VIELÉ-GRIFFIN (p. 300). Another American whom France long ago absorbed. He has been much influenced by Swinburne.

ROBERT D'HUMIÈRES (p. 303). Died fighting for France in 1915.

294. M. Fort prints his nearly regular stanzas as prose paragraphs, and I have therefore followed his habit.

CHARLES GUÉRIN (p. 309), a link between French poetry and the Catholic tradition.





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